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GOING UP THE COUNTRY: A COMPARISON OF ELITE CERAMIC CONSUMPTION  
PATTERNS IN CHARLESTON AND THE CAROLINA FRONTIER

by

Rebecca E. Shepherd

Bachelor of Science  
College of Charleston, 2007

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts in

Anthropology

College of Arts and Sciences

University of South Carolina

2014

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## DEDICATION

To my grandfather, William Hall, who would be so proud, but also ready to joke with everyone about how I spent even more time and money just to “learn how to dig in the dirt.” Thanks for everything Pop; I wouldn’t be where I am without you.

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I must also express my gratitude to Mr. Luther Wannamaker, the landowner of Fort Motte, for allowing us access to the site and his constant support of ongoing excavations there. I am forever grateful for the crew and volunteers of the 2013 Fort Motte excavations: Jesse Childress, John Fisher, Andrew Frierson, Amy Goldstein, Marybeth Harte, Heathley Johnson, Larry Lane, Jim Legg, Bach Pham, and Tamara Wilson. Without your assistance the Mount Joseph Plantation ceramic assemblage would have been much smaller. Additional thanks to my SCIAA colleagues Jim Legg, Tamara Wilson, and Karen Smith. Jim, thank you for your assistance with artifact cataloging and

for sharing your wealth of eighteenth-century material culture knowledge. Tamara, thank you for your map making skills and for constantly encouraging me to finish. Karen, thank you for always answering my many ceramic analysis questions.

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## ABSTRACT

The 18<sup>th</sup> century colonial world is characterized by a dramatic increase in the consumption of goods identified as the “consumer revolution.” During this period fashionable material culture and the social performances associated with their use became universally recognized symbols of group membership. This thesis uses archaeological evidence to explore variation in the degree of participation in the consumer revolution between urban and rural settings in late eighteenth-century South Carolina.

The data used for this research will be taken from excavated ceramic assemblages of two domestic archaeological sites, both of which were homes owned consecutively by the wealthy Brewton and Motte family from approximately 1769 to 1791. One, the Miles Brewton House, was located in the urban center of Charleston and the other, Mount Joseph Plantation, was constructed along the Congaree River in Amelia Township, an area that was then considered South Carolina’s backcountry.

The consumption patterns of the Brewton and Motte family will be explored through a statistical comparison of the excavated ceramic assemblages of both of these residences. Interpreting the differences in these assemblages through the lens of conspicuous consumption and signaling theory provides insight into the social climate of the late eighteenth century colonial frontier, increases knowledge of the differences between urban and rural participation in the consumer revolution, and explores the range of variation in colonial experiences in Revolutionary period South Carolina.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 SOURCES OF DATA .....	3
1.2 OVERVIEW OF THESIS LAYOUT .....	6
CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CAROLINA COLONY AND THE BREWTON AND MOTTE FAMILY .....	8
2.1 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CAROLINA AT CHARLES TOWNE .....	9
2.2 BACKCOUNTRY EXPANSION .....	10
2.3 CONSUMER CULTURE IN COLONIAL SOUTH CAROLINA.....	12
2.4 THE BREWTON AND MOTTE FAMILY .....	15
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	23
3.1 EXPLANATIONS OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MATERIAL CULTURE CHANGE .....	24
3.2 APPLICATIONS OF CONSUMERISM IN HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY .....	28
3.3 REGIONAL VARIATION IN COLONIAL CONSUMER CULTURE.....	33
3.4 DIFFERENCES IN CONSUMER CHOICE IN COLONIAL SOUTH CAROLINA .....	40
3.5 CONCLUSION .....	42



CHAPTER 4: ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD AND LABORATORY METHODS .....	44
4.1 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE MILES BREWTON HOUSE .....	44
4.2 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF MOUNT JOSEPH PLANTATION/FORT MOTTE (38CL1) .....	47
4.3 LABORATORY METHODS AND CERAMIC ANALYSIS .....	53
4.4 LIMITATIONS TO ANALYSIS .....	56
CHAPTER 5: CERAMIC ANALYSIS .....	59
5.1 THE MILES BREWTON HOUSE ASSEMBLAGE .....	59
5.2 THE MOUNT JOSEPH PLANTATION ASSEMBLAGE .....	63
5.3 GENERAL COMPARISONS AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS .....	67
5.4 CONCLUSION .....	76
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .....	77
6.1 REGIONAL COMPARISONS .....	78
6.2 ECONOMIC MEANS AND ACCESS .....	80
6.3 SOCIAL REASONS FOR THE MOTTE FAMILY CONSUMPTION CHANGE .....	82
6.4 CONCLUSIONS .....	86
REFERENCES .....	88

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 5.1 Late Eighteenth-Century Ceramic Assemblage of the Miles Brewton House ..	60
Table 5.2 Date Ranges of the Mount Joseph Plantation Ceramics .....	64
Table 5.3 Late-Eighteenth-Century Ceramic Assemblage of Mount Joseph Plantation ..	65
Table 5.4 Five Most Numerous Ceramics at Each Site .....	68
Table 5.5 Ceramic Material Types Compared in Chi Square .....	69
Table 5.6 Results of Ceramic Material Type Chi Square .....	70
Table 5.7 Ceramic Ware Type Compared in Chi Square .....	70
Table 5.8 Results of Ceramic Ware Type Chi Square .....	71
Table 5.9 Ranks of Ceramic Ware Types used for a Spearman's Rank Correlation.....	71
Table 5.10 Percentages of Ranked Ceramic Ware Types at Each Site.....	75
Table 5.11 Rank Order for Ceramic Types from Each Site.....	75
Table 5.12 Results of Spearman's Rank Correlation.....	76

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Location of the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation .....	4
Figure 2.1 The Miles Brewton House .....	16
Figure 2.2 Rebecca Motte .....	18
Figure 4.1 The Miles Brewton House Excavation .....	46
Figure 4.2 The National Register of Historic Places Boundary of Fort Motte .....	49

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The eighteenth-century colonial world is characterized by a dramatic increase in the consumption of material goods known as the “consumer revolution” (Breen 1994; Carson 1994; Nash 2009; Pogue 2001). During this period Europeans and colonial Americans began to view fashionable material possessions, and the social performances associated with them, as universally recognized symbols of group membership (Carson 1994: 522). This thesis explores the variance in the degree of participation in the consumer revolution between urban and rural colonial settings. In particular, this research will focus on the late eighteenth-century urban and backcountry occupations of the same elite South Carolina family, that of Miles Brewton and his sister Rebecca Motte. Comparison of the artifact assemblages of the two residences has the potential to increase our knowledge of the differences between urban and rural participation in the consumer revolution and the range of variation in colonial life in Revolutionary period South Carolina.

Colonial South Carolina provides an ideal setting to explore this topic. Historian, R.C. Nash (2009: 223) argues that elite South Carolinians had greater wealth and engaged in conspicuous consumption to a degree unparalleled in other colonies. Charleston’s merchant-planter aristocracy, of which the Brewton and Motte family were members, “communicated their authority, power, and identity through possessions as

well as actions” (Zierden 1999: 75). However, the degree to which elite colonists communicated their status through material goods in South Carolina’s more rural backcountry regions is less well known. This thesis will address the question of whether the elite Motte family altered their ceramic consumption patterns following their move from Charleston to the Carolina frontier.

Archaeologists have always been interested in social relationships within colonial frontier or backcountry regions, but have only recently begun to consider frontiers as multi-staged phenomena and to explore the existence of variation within the experiences of European colonizers (Hauser and Armstrong 2012; Stoler 1989; Voss 2005; 2008). One way to observe this variation is through the comparison of consumption patterns. Consumerism, defined as the cultural relationship between people, ideas, and material objects, can be used to study economic product values as well as differing notions of taste, style, status, and social competition (Martin 1993). A framework based on consumption and consumer agency recognizes that goods are assigned meanings and used to mediate social relationships (Cook et al. 1996). People acquire goods, to “confirm, display, accent, mask and imagine who [they] are and who [they] wish to be” (Mullins 2011: 135). The consumption of goods does not just convey social status but is a continual process of self-definition and collective identification (Mullins 2011). To best explore the communicative nature of material culture a theoretical framework based on consumer agency, conspicuous consumption, and signaling theory will be used to interpret the similarities and differences between the Motte family’s occupations.

Although many researchers have previously examined the differences between urban and backcountry lifeways in South Carolina (Crass et al. 1999; Nash 1994) few

have focused on members of the elite upper class or had the opportunity to examine both the urban and rural life of the same family. In 1969 Laura Nader encouraged anthropologists to focus on the culture of the powerful as well as the powerless, to “study up” within their own society. She believed that the study of a culture of affluence would allow anthropologists to ask their common sense questions in reverse, understanding the origins of affluence to better understand social situations of other social classes (Nader 1974 [1969]). This concept can be applied archaeologically to the study of powerful and affluent colonial families, such as the Brewtons and Mottes. The Brewton and Motte family was considered one of the wealthiest in the colony during the time period leading up to the American Revolution, an economic status that is clearly reflected in the architecture and material culture remains of Miles Brewton’s Charleston home. An investigation of how this elite family actively changed or continued their consumption patterns following a move from Charleston to the rural backcountry could provide insight into the social climate of the late eighteenth century colonial frontier.

## **SOURCES OF DATA**

The data used for this research will be taken from two domestic archaeological sites, both of which were homes owned consecutively by Miles Brewton and his sister Rebecca Motte. Both residences were occupied by the Motte family for a short period of time during the late eighteenth century. One, the Miles Brewton House, was located in the urban center of Charleston and the other, Mount Joseph Plantation, was constructed along the Congaree River in Amelia Township, an area that was then considered South Carolina’s backcountry (Figure 1.1). The southern colonial backcountry is demarcated as the upland regions of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia as well as pockets of

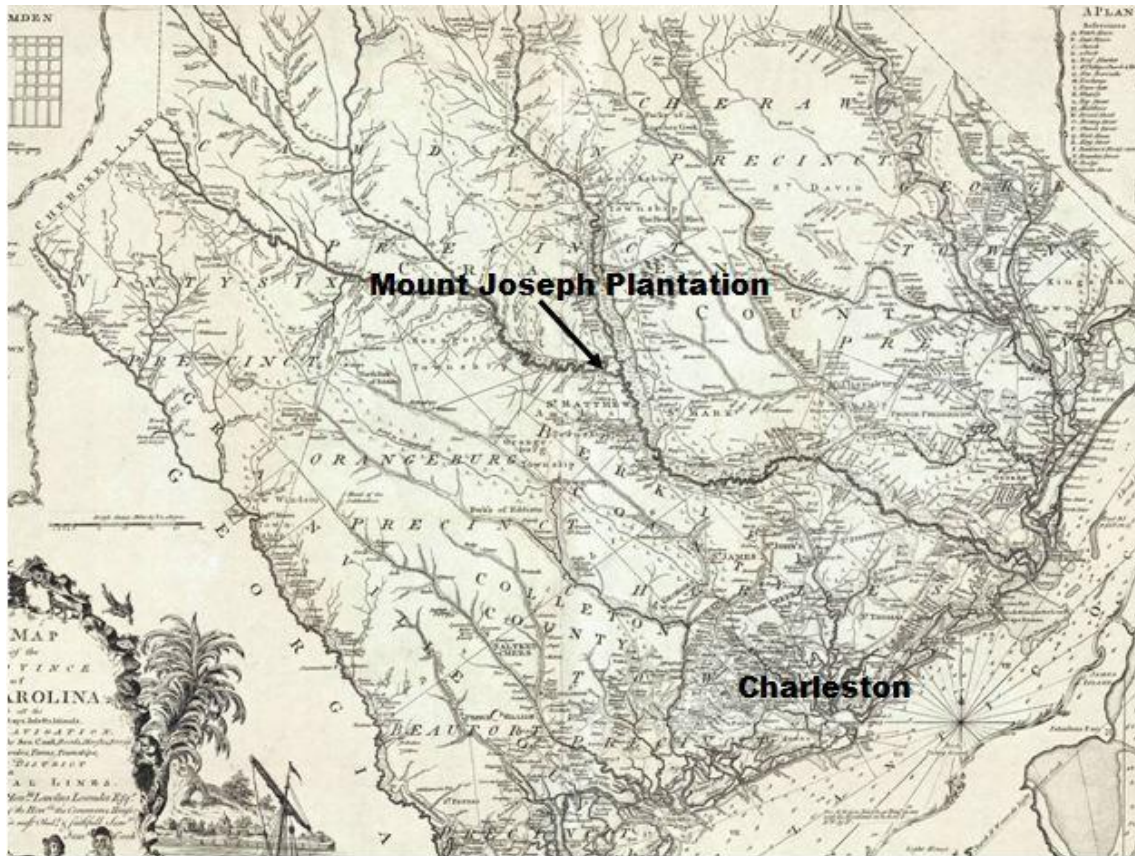


Figure 1.1 Location of Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation, 1773 Map of South Carolina, James Cook

Tennessee and was a region of secondary European settlement, which began in the early eighteenth century, following the initial colonization of the coast (Crass, et al. 1998:).

Miles Brewton and his sister Rebecca Motte, were both extremely wealthy and influential citizens of colonial South Carolina. Brewton acquired the property that is now Charleston's 27 King Street in 1765 and in 1769 completed construction of a grand Georgian style double house on the lot (Zierden 2001). He acquired Mount Joseph Plantation, which he likely managed from Charleston, in 1772 (Smith et al. 2007). Much of Brewton's estate, including both of these properties, was inherited by his sister Rebecca Motte after Brewton's death in 1775 (Zierden 2001). Although the exact date is

unknown, it is believed that Motte, her husband Jacob, and their daughters, moved into Miles Brewton's Charleston house sometime shortly after her inheritance (Helsley 2009). Following her husband's death in 1780, Rebecca left the British occupied Charleston and moved her family to her home on the Congaree, Mount Joseph Plantation, where she lived until at least 1781 (Helsley 2009). During her occupation of Mount Joseph Plantation, Motte saw her home occupied and fortified by British forces when they turned it into what would later be known as Fort Motte (Smith et al. 2007). In May of 1781, American forces began a siege of Fort Motte, resulting in a six day battle (Smith et al. 2007). After a legendary display of patriotism in which Rebecca Motte granted the Americans permission to burn her home to secure a British surrender, the battle ended with an American victory (Smith et al. 2007).

Excavations of the Miles Brewton House were conducted by the Charleston Museum from 1988 to 1990 as part of a restoration project (Zierden 2001). A series of trenches and units were dug in the back and side yards of the property with the goal of answering questions concerning the architectural evolution of the main house and outbuildings (Zierden 2001). Excavations were conducted at Fort Motte/Mount Joseph Plantation in 2004, 2005, 2012, and 2013 by the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology with the goal of obtaining information about the plantation house and battle (Smith, et al. 2007; Whitacre 2013). These efforts successfully located battle features including the fort ditch and American approach trench, as well as confirmed the location of the Motte plantation house and uncovered both its east and west chimneys.

The consumption patterns of the Brewton and Motte family will be explored in this thesis through an examination of the excavated artifact remains of both the Miles



Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation. In particular, ceramic artifacts were chosen as the main line of comparison. Martin (1994: 169) states that “an assemblage of ceramics can provide great insight into the lives of colonial households in the past.”

Ceramics are frequently used by historical archaeologists to discuss status, wealth, social differentiation, and changes in eating and drinking habits. In addition to describing status and wealth, ceramics can be useful for answering more post-processual questions of identity, social relationships, and changing ideologies. Examining the choices in ceramic consumption can provide clues to the meanings those items conveyed to both their users and observers and explore the power of the colonial period’s fashion-driven consumer culture (Martin 1994).

The late eighteenth-century consumer landscape is characterized by the growing domination of the world’s tableware market by English potters (Miller 1980; 1991). Of all of the luxury items that represent the consumer revolution, ceramics are the most distinctive and comparable. They are also one of the most common and best preserved artifacts found archaeologically and represent the most numerous diagnostic artifacts excavated from both the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation, making them the perfect choice for this analysis. The excavated late eighteenth-century ceramic assemblage of each site will be analyzed and compared by ceramic material, type, and decoration. Additionally, statistical analysis will be performed on each assemblage to confirm their similarity or difference. A similarity of ceramic assemblages between the two sites will indicate a continuation of urban consumption habits in the backcountry, while a dissimilarity will suggest that the Motte family changed their consumption habits to better adapt to frontier society.

## **OVERVIEW OF THESIS LAYOUT**

In order to fully understand the reasons behind the Motte family's ceramic consumption choices it is first necessary to thoroughly examine the relevant historical, theoretical, and archaeological data applicable to this question. Chapter Two situates this research historically by providing a broad overview of colonial period South Carolina, an examination of late eighteenth century consumption patterns in South Carolina, and a specific history of Miles Brewton and Rebecca Motte. Chapter Three provides a detailed literature review of the theoretical framework guiding this research. The anthropological and archaeological approaches to eighteenth century culture change, agent centered studies of consumption and consumer choice, and frontier theory will be presented. Chapter Four details the methodology used in this research project, including previous excavations of the Miles Brewton House and Fort Motte/Mount Joseph Plantation, laboratory methods, and limitations to research. Chapter Five presents the detailed attributes of the late eighteenth century ceramic assemblages of the two sites and the results of three statistical tests used to compare these assemblages. Finally, Chapter Six attempts to combine this data with the theoretical views on consumption to interpret why the Motte family changed their ceramic consumption patterns following their move to Mount Joseph Plantation.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CAROLINA COLONY AND THE BREWTON AND MOTTE FAMILY

Understanding the historical context in which the Brewton and Motte families lived is essential to understanding the motives behind their consumer choices. Within a century of its founding, South Carolina had become the wealthiest of Britain's North American colonies (Hudgins 1999; Nash 2009; Weir 1997). The colony's plantation economy, based on slave labor and the production of the cash crops rice and indigo, expanded faster than any other in British North America, providing South Carolinians with greater access to fashionable British commodities (Nash 2009). The majority of the colony's wealth was controlled by only a small percentage of the population who created an influential merchant-planter aristocracy. Miles Brewton and his sister Rebecca Motte were members of this elite upper class group and some of the wealthiest residents of the colony. Their immense wealth provided them with a purchasing power ideal for participating in and influencing the ever growing consumer culture of Anglo-America.

This chapter will begin with a brief overview of South Carolina's settlement and growth during the colonial period, focusing on the demographic, economic, and cultural differences between the port city of Charleston and the more rural backcountry. A discussion of how the consumer revolution of the mid to late eighteenth century influenced these regions of South Carolina and their residents will follow. Finally, a

specific history of Miles Brewton, Rebecca Motte, and their occupations of both 27 King Street and Mount Joseph Plantation will be provided.

### **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CAROLINA AT CHARLES TOWNE**

In 1663 England's King Charles II granted the land rights to the Carolina colony to a group of eight noblemen known as the Lords Proprietors (Weir 1997: 49). Carolina consisted of a large tract of land stretching southward from Virginia to Spanish Florida and by the 1660's had already seen failed settlement attempts by both the Spanish and French (Weir 1997). To the Lords Proprietors, Carolina was an economic venture and they hoped to profit in overseas markets from commodities produced there (Edgar 1998:131; Weir 1997: 50). They began planning the colony's successful settlement by actively recruiting experienced settlers from established British colonies in the Northeast and Caribbean (Edgar 1998: 131; Weir 1997: 50).

In April of 1670 the first permanent English settlement south of Virginia Colony, Charles Towne, was established along the west bank of the Ashley River (Weir 1997: 58). Approximately half of the initial colonists had relocated from Barbados bringing with them a Caribbean culture that would leave a permanent mark on Carolina (Edgar 1998: 49). In 1680 Charles Towne was relocated to a neck of land between the Ashley and Cooper Rivers known as Oyster Point, where the current city of Charleston stands (Weir 1997: 61). This new location allowed for the creation of a port which was suited to receive large shipping vessels but left the city vulnerable to attack from the French and Spanish (Zierden 2001). The small city was fortified with a wall in 1704 and did not outgrow these boundaries until the 1730's (Zierden 2001).

The colonists settling Carolina arrived seeking their fortunes and engaged in various activities in attempts to profit off of this new land. During the colony's initial frontier period settlers made a living from the Native American deer skin trade and the export of provisions of beef, pork, and naval stores to Barbados and other Caribbean islands (Weir 1997: 142-143). During this period, Charles Town became the principal trade center for the colony. Rice cultivation became popular in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, increasing the colony's wealth and its need for slave labor (Edgar 1998: 138). The 1719 replacement of proprietary government with royal rule opened the port of Charles Town to the mainstream colonial economy and encouraged the expansion of the slavery based plantation system (Zierden 2001: 18). When the price of rice declined in the 1740's the production of indigo, another crop reliant on intensive slave labor, increased (Weir 1997: 146). The continued cultivation of rice and indigo through slave labor enabled South Carolina's colonists to quickly become some of the wealthiest in British North America.

### **BACKCOUNTRY EXPANSION**

Colonial expansion from Charles Town into the backcountry occurred immediately but was not officially encouraged until the mid-eighteenth century. In order to follow the Barbadian plantation model to which they were accustomed, Carolina's initial colonists ignored the Proprietor's direction to create township-like settlements and quickly began to spread out to isolated plantations along the lowcountry's rivers (Weir 1997: 61). However, the more interior regions of Carolina were not considered safe for settlement until after the end of the Yemassee war in 1717 (Klein 1990). In the early 1730's local leaders began to advocate for the establishment of more compact settlements

on the frontier to provide the colony with better protection from attacks from both the Spanish and Native Americans (Edgar 1998, Klein 1990, Weir 1997). By 1759 a total of 10 townships were established approximately 60 miles inland along the colony's major rivers and another three townships would be created in the piedmont region during the 1760's (Weir 1997: 208).

The townships drew many new settlers to South Carolina, causing a surge in population during the late-eighteenth century. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the colony's total number of white inhabitants reached approximately 140,000, 80 percent of which resided in the backcountry (Weir 1997: 205-209). Most of the new backcountry settlers were non-English (Klein 1990; Weir 1997). Immigrants from Germany, Switzerland, France, Ireland, and Scotland established inland farmsteads creating a multiethnic and culturally diverse region that was distinct from the primarily English lowcountry (Crass et al. 1998; Klein 1990; Wier 1997). The population of Amelia Township, established near the juncture of the Congaree and Santee Rivers, was comprised of between one third and one half German immigrants by the mid-eighteenth century, but the area was also populated early on by English migrants from the coastal region (Edgar 1998; Klein 1990). It was in this township that Miles Brewton decided to establish his Mount Joseph Plantation in 1772.

Despite the rapid population growth, the colonial backcountry remained home to mostly small farmers punctuated with a few large plantations, many of which were owned and managed from afar by coastal residents (Weir 1997: 210-211). Very few backcountry residents were able to acquire enough wealth to qualify as members of the colony's elite upper class (Edgar 1998: 167). Colonial backcountry towns also remained

small and inconsequential. The largest inland villages, Camden and Nintey-Six, developed post 1750 as milling, trading, and courthouse towns, but paled as commercial centers in comparison to Charles Town (Weir 1997: 170). These inland towns were also dominated politically and economically by Charles Town, where all governmental decisions were made and whose merchants controlled local markets (Edgar 1998: 163).

As the backcountry continued to expand, Charles Town was also transforming from a small frontier city into the colony's most important mercantile center and by the end of the eighteenth century would become the fourth largest and wealthiest city per capita in British North America (Zierden 1999). Charleston was the social, economic, political, and cultural center of South Carolina and its incredibly wealthy merchant-planter aristocracy quickly emerged as a distinct and influential group (Zierden 2001). Charleston's immense wealth can be attributed to its strength as a port city and connections to the wider Atlantic world. Although Charleston served as an entrepôt for the flow of goods and ideas throughout the colonial southeast, it was firmly tied to the consumer and cultural trends of England (Hudgins 1999; Zierden 2009).

## **CONSUMER CULTURE IN COLONIAL SOUTH CAROLINA**

During the eighteenth century, the colonial Atlantic world experienced a dramatic rise in material culture and consumer demand, a cultural shift that Carson (1994) and others (McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb 1982) identify as "the consumer revolution." Beginning in the late seventeenth century, material goods in northern Europe and her colonies began to take on new meanings as social mediators (Carson 1994: 517-523). The increasing mobility of people, due to population growth, urbanization, and colonization, created a need for a set of standardized and portable status markers (Carson 1994: 517-

523). When people moved to new places, like the colonies, old measures of social status based on reputation no longer applied (Carson 1994: 523-524). Possessions, like fashionable furnishings and table wares, and the social performances associated with them, quickly replaced family reputation as tools for embodying power, reinforcing status, and cultivating a distinctive, genteel style of life (Carson 1994: 523-524).

These new and fashionable consumer goods were seen as indispensable components of genteel society and were used by the elite to create a display that would distinguish themselves from the lower classes (Nash 2009: 242). The ability to own the proper fashion became a badge of group membership and consumer goods served two main purposes, acting as symbols of group identity and as devices that social climbers imitated (Carson 1994: 522). This new method of establishing identity with material culture soon led to an explosion in the manufacture and availability of consumer goods in the mid to late eighteenth century (Pogue 2001: 52). The best example of this increase in manufacture was the mass production of stylish tablewares by potter, Josiah Wedgwood.

Although widespread, the degree of participation in the consumer revolution was shaped by local conditions and vernacular traditions (Sweeny 1994: 2). Generally, urban areas saw the greatest increase in material displays of wealth and status (Breen 1994: 451; Sweeny 1994: 25). According to Nash (2009: 223) South Carolina's rapid economic growth during the mid to late eighteenth century caused the development of a distinct consumer culture, which differed significantly from that in other colonies. The consumer revolution spread into South Carolina faster than other colonies and Carolina's upper classes engaged in consumption more heavily than elite elsewhere (Nash 2009: 223). Eighteenth century South Carolinians held four times more wealth than Virginians and



ten times more than Massachusettsans and their imports of tea, glassware, and tableware far exceeded the other colonies (Nash 2009: 234-236). In fact, as early as the 1730's, the presence of consumer goods, like ceramics, in the probate inventories of South Carolinians matched or exceeded those found in London (Nash 2009: 234-237).

Nowhere in South Carolina was this pattern of consumerism more evident than in colonial Charleston where elites could easily attain any good or service that was available in London (Edgar 1998: 167). Charleston quickly acquired all of the cultural trappings of large English towns including the theater, public concerts, dances, private clubs, libraries, and a museum (Weir 1997: 238-240). Charleston served as an economic and cultural mediator between South Carolina's backcountry and the wider Atlantic world and particularly England (Hudgins 1999). Charleston looked to London for the latest trends in fashion and material culture and the backcountry looked to and emulated Charleston (Hudgins 1999).

Although the majority of backcountry residents had little physical contact with Charleston, the presence and influence of the city shaped their behavior and choice of material goods (Zierden and Herman 1999). Nash (2009: 246) argues that in South Carolina the boundaries between town and country were much more fluid than in other colonies due to its high degree of integration of urban and rural economies. Backcountry residents had access to Charleston's supply and distribution system, allowing both rural and urban households to adopt a "high-style" consumerism that other colonies strictly associated with urban culture (Nash 2009: 246-249). A study of archaeological remains and probate inventories from New Windsor Township (Crass et al. 1999) supports this by demonstrating that the types of material culture found in the backcountry were not

inherently different from those in Charleston, but that backcountry residents acquired less of these goods. Additionally, comparative studies of rural and urban probate inventories have shown that the richest Charlestonians, like the Brewton and Motte families, held approximately 40 percent more wealth than their rural counterparts and 80 percent more consumer goods (Nash 2009: 242).

### **THE BREWTON AND MOTTE FAMILY**

The two owners of the properties of interest to this thesis, Miles Brewton and Rebecca Motte, were both very wealthy and influential citizens of colonial South Carolina. Miles Brewton was born in Charleston in 1731 to Robert Brewton and Mary Griffith (Cote 2000). Brewton made his fortune as one of South Carolina's largest slave dealers, a trade that would allow him to become one of the five wealthiest men in the colony (Edgar and Bailey 1974: 95-96). Brewton invested his wealth in ships and land, owning or joint-owning eight commercial vessels and several plantations in South Carolina's frontier regions on the Congaree, Savannah, and Paceolet rivers, including Mount Joseph Plantation (Edgar and Bailey 1974: 96). Brewton was also an active participant in South Carolina politics, serving as a member of the Commons House of Assembly from 1763 to 1772 and was elected as a deputy to the First and Second Provincial Congress in 1775 (Edgar and Bailey 1974: 96-97).

Miles Brewton acquired the property that is now 27 King Street in 1765 and began construction of a house (Figure 2.1) shortly after (Zierden 2001). Construction was completed in 1769 resulting in what many believe to be the finest example of a Georgian double house in Charleston (Bivins 1986: 35, Zierden 2001: 25). The two story structure measures 54 by 65 feet and features an elevated basement, a hipped roof, two tiered



Figure 2.1 The Miles Brewton House (27 King Street) Courtesy of The Charleston Museum

portico, carved fretwork frieze, and a richly decorated interior (Zierden 2001: 25). The house cost Brewton 8,000 pounds sterling to construct and reflected the height of English fashion (Edgar 1998: 199). The interior of Brewton's house was even more extravagant than its exterior and was purposely furnished and decorated to impress allowing this residence to quickly become a center for entertainment (Zierden 2001). Upon his visit in 1773, Josiah Quincy remarked that he "dined with considerable company at Miles Brewton, Esqr's, a gentleman of very large fortune, a most superb house. The grandest hall I ever beheld, azure blue stain window curtains, a rich blue paper with gilt, mashee

border, most elegant pictures, excessive grand and costly looking glasses, &c.” (Cote 2000: 19). The blue wallpaper to which Quincy refers, was a very elegant wall treatment that was in vogue in London at the time, demonstrating the family’s taste for fashionable British goods (Bivins 1986: 43).

This structure remained Brewton’s primary residence until his death (Zierden 2001: 26). In 1775 Brewton embarked on a voyage to Philadelphia to state his concerns about the impending revolution to the Second Provincial Congress (Edgar and Bailey 1974: 97). Unfortunately the ship never made it to Philadelphia and the entire Brewton family perished at sea (Edgar and Bailey 1974: 97). Following his death, much of Brewton’s estate, including his house on King Street and Mount Joseph Plantation on the Congaree River, was inherited by his sister Rebecca Motte (Helsley 2009: 114).

Miles’ younger sister, Rebecca Brewton (Figure 2.2) was born in Charleston in 1737 (Cote 2000). On June 11, 1758 she married prominent plantation owner and politician, Jacob Motte (Edgar and Bailey 1974: 480-481). Motte owned the profitable Fairfield Plantation on the lower Santee River (Edgar and Bailey 1974: 480). Like his brother-in-law, Jacob Motte was also a very active and powerful figure in South Carolina politics. He served on the Royal Assemblies between 1760 and 1775, in the Second Provincial Congress, and on the First, Second and Third General Assemblies between 1775 and 1780 (Edgar and Bailey 1974: 480-481). The Mottes also wholeheartedly supported the patriot cause, and used their excess wealth to frequently provide supplies and slave labor to the Continental Army and militia forces (Helsley 2009: 115).

Although the exact date is unknown, it is believed that Rebecca Motte and her family moved into Miles Brewton’s Charleston house sometime shortly after her



Figure 2.2 Rebecca Motte (Lossing 2004 [1860]: 150)

inheritance (Smith et al. 2007: 13). Rebecca, her husband Jacob, and their three daughters, Elizabeth, Frances, and Mary, were known to be living at 27 King Street by 1780 (Zierden 2001: 29). By this time America was four years into the Revolutionary War and the British forces had recently defeated and occupied the city of Charleston (Helsley 2009: 116). British officers Sir Henry Clinton and Lord Rawdon both used 27 King Street as their headquarters, while Rebecca was forced to serve as their hostess (Helsley 2009: 116). Following her husband's death in 1780, Rebecca obtained permission from Lord Rawdon to leave Charleston and move her family to her home on the Congaree, Mount Joseph Plantation (Helsley 2009: 117).

Miles Brewton acquired Mount Joseph from Benjamin Farrar on July 11, 1772 (Smith et al. 2007: 14). The plantation was located in Amelia Township near the juncture

of the Congaree and Santee Rivers. The deed of sale indicates that Brewton bought 1,000 acres from Farrar, including all gardens, orchards, fences, water courses, and wells but does not mention any extant structures on the property (Smith et al. 2007: 14). The description of the property in Brewton's will also includes no mention of structures (Will of Miles Brewton, Wills, Charleston County, South Carolina Vol. 161 [microform] The South Carolina Room, Charleston County Library).

It is unclear if a house existed on the plantation prior to Rebecca Motte moving there. Lieutenant Colonel Henry Lee's account of the siege of Fort Motte describes Motte's home as a "large, new mansion-house" suggesting it may have only been a few years old in 1781 (Lee 1998: 345). Other accounts (Bass 1960; James 1850; Lossing 2004) mention that there was also an "overseers," "farm house," or "old log cabin" on the property. During Brewton's ownership Mount Joseph was likely used as an indigo plantation and managed by an overseer in his absence (Smith et al. 2007:14). The plantation does not seem to have been occupied by either family until Rebecca Motte's move in 1780.

The members of the Motte family who lived at Mount Joseph consisted of Rebecca, her daughters Elizabeth Motte Pinckney (married to Thomas Pinckney), Frances, and Mary, Elizabeth's newborn son, and Rebecca's nephew's widow, Mary Weyman Brewton (Helsley 2009: 117). The first evidence of the family living at Mount Joseph is from a letter written by Elizabeth to her mother-in-law Eliza Lucas Pinckney, dated Mount Joseph: July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1780 (E. M. Pinckney 1780). The letter describes the small pox epidemic affecting members of the Motte family and the surrounding plantations (E. M. Pinckney 1780). Additional correspondence between Elizabeth and Eliza, from

September of the same year, mentions the birth of Elizabeth's son and continued illness on the plantation (E. L. Pinckney 1780). A few weeks following the birth of her son, Elizabeth's husband, Major Thomas Pinckney, was wounded in the Battle of Camden and captured by the British (Helsley 2009: 118). Pinckney was saved by British officer and former schoolmate, Captain Charles Barrington McKenzie, provided with medical care, and granted transfer to the Motte's home at Mount Joseph for recuperation in October of 1780 (Helsley 2009: 118-119).

The Revolution crept closer to Mount Joseph in November of 1780, with the British fortification of the nearby Belleville Plantation the Revolution, which added even more stress to the Motte family's sufferings of small pox and the responsibility of caring for a newborn and wounded soldier (Smith et al. 2007: 15-17). The following January Major Pinckney had recovered enough to travel to Charleston with his wife and son, just before the British decided to move their fortification from Belleville to Mount Joseph (Smith et al. 2007: 16-17). The British began the process of converting Rebecca Motte's mansion into Fort Motte in late January of 1781, completing construction in April (Smith et al. 2007: 18). Once fortified with a wooden palisade and earthen rampart, Fort Motte became the principal British outpost west of the Congaree River (Smith et al. 2007: 18).

In early May, American Colonels Marion and Lee attempted to take Fort Motte as part of a campaign to attack British posts along the Santee (Smith et al. 2007: 20). On May 6 they arrived at the fort and began to prepare for battle (Smith et al. 2007: 23). Marion and his men decided to camp at nearby Belleville Plantation, while Lee and his Continentals set up on a hill adjacent to the Motte farmhouse (Smith et al. 2007: 23). The American troops immediately began to attack, digging a sap, or siege approach trench,

towards the fort and creating an artillery mound (Smith et al. 2007: 23). With the arrival of the American troops, Rebecca Motte and her family were asked by the British to leave their house and immediately relocated to the overseers or farmhouse to the north of the mansion (Smith et al. 2007: 24). Four days into the siege Marion offered the British a chance to lay down their arms, which they refused (Smith et al. 2007: 24). Marion then decided to torch the house in order to force surrender (Smith et al. 2007: 24). On May 12, Lee reluctantly informed Rebecca Motte that her house must be burned, which according to legend she agreed with whole-heartedly and presented Lee a bow equipped with fire arrows to do the deed (Smith et al. 2007: 24- 25). Shortly after the roof of the house was set on fire the British surrendered, the fire was put out, and Lee and Marion successfully captured the fort (Smith et al. 2007: 26).

Information about what became of Mount Joseph Plantation following the defeat of the British is sparse. Rebecca Motte continued living there until November of 1781, when Lieutenant James Simmons was ordered to escort her to her plantation on the Santee (Smith et al. 2007: 34). Motte eventually sold the property, although the date is unknown. A petition from Rebecca's daughter Mary Brewton Motte to the Speaker and members of the House of Representatives, dated to 1788, describes how the construction of a ferry across the Congaree will render her plantation Buckhead useless (Motte 1788). Mount Joseph Plantation was also known as Buckhead Hill (Smith et al. 2007), so it seems that the plantation remained in the Motte family until at least 1788. Mary Brewton Motte married William Alston in 1791 and moved into the Miles Brewton house in Charleston, suggesting Mount Joseph may have been sold then (Zierden 2001: 29). In 1784 Rebecca Motte purchased four hundred acres on the Santee River and established



Eldorado Plantation with her son-in-law Thomas Pinckney, where she died on January 12, 1815 (Helsley 2009: 122-123). There is no mention of Mount Joseph Plantation in her will and it is unlikely that the plantation was in her possession at her death (Will of Rebecca Motte. Wills, Charleston County, South Carolina Vol. 33 [microform]. The South Carolina Room, Charleston County Library)

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This research explores the differences between the choices in material culture of the urban and rural lives of the same family residing in late eighteenth-century South Carolina. It is commonly believed that during the colonial period in North America the consumption of luxury consumer goods became an important element in class based social strategies and Americans of all statuses learned to signal and read social class through material possessions (Breen 1994; Carson 1994; Cook et al. 1996; Nash 2009; Pogue 2001). Therefore, theoretical approaches geared toward understanding the communicative nature of material culture and the agency of consumers is well suited to this topic. Additionally an exploration of theoretical perspectives of the geographic and cultural differences between rural and urban colonial settings will help to further contextualize this research geographically.

In this chapter I will provide an overview of archaeological applications of social mediation through material culture, beginning with explanations of eighteenth-century culture change. The theory of the “consumer revolution,” put forth by Carson (1994) will be argued to be the best explanation of this shift. His ideas provide a foundation for the meanings behind the eighteenth-century increase in material culture and agent centered studies of consumption and consumer choice, which will be discussed next. Finally, an overview of the theoretical perspectives guiding research on frontier and backcountry

regions will be provided, to help geographically situate my research on the differences of consumption patterns in colonial South Carolina. The chapter will conclude by arguing that a combination of signaling theory and that of multi-staged variation in colonial frontiers will be most useful for understanding the differences in ceramic choices in urban and rural colonial South Carolina.

### **EXPLANATIONS OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MATERIAL CULTURE CHANGE**

During the eighteenth century the material culture of the Atlantic world began to change and proliferate. European colonists were consuming more material goods than ever before and these goods were beginning to take on new social meanings. Researchers studying colonial America have long debated the reasons for this shift in the forms and rate of consumption of material culture. These explanations have fallen into three different, but complementary, theoretical perspectives: structuralism, Marxism, and consumerism (Pogue 2001). Although research rooted in structuralism and Marxism have provided valuable insights, I argue that approaches focused on consumerism best explain the significance fashionable material culture held to colonial Anglo-Americans.

In his seminal work, *In Small Things Forgotten* (1996 [1977]), archaeologist James Deetz first proposed his structuralist model for eighteenth-century material culture change known as the Georgian worldview. By seeing material culture as “that part of the physical world that we can shape according to a set of cultural plans,” Deetz (2003 [1988]: 220) believed that the study of material culture could provide the archaeologist access to the mindset of those who created it. Analyzing data from New England and Virginia, Deetz argued that changes in seemingly unrelated forms of material culture,

including houses, gravestones, and ceramics, were a parallel for the changing ideologies and worldview of Anglo-Americans (Deetz 1996 [1977]).

According to Deetz, the cultural practices present during the first century of British occupation in the American colonies were very similar to those in England, an ideology he termed medieval (Deetz 1996 [1977]). This medieval ideology was characterized by a material record that reflected a traditional, emotional, organic, and communal worldview (Deetz 1996 [1977]). This worldview dominated the culture of colonial America until the mid-eighteenth century when the influence of the Renaissance and Age of Reason had “reformed the English worldview into something totally different from its earlier, medieval form” (Deetz 1996 [1977]: 62). These changes constituted a new ideology identified as the Georgian worldview that valued balance, order, individualism, and a refined separation from the natural world (Deetz 1996 [1977]). The new material culture associated with the Georgian worldview emphasized floor plans that allowed for more private domestic spaces, individual place settings and chairs, and a whitening of ceramics and gravestones (Deetz 1996 [1977]). Deetz (1996 [1977]) argues that this rise of individualism and changes in consumption represent the attempt of colonists to gain control over their increasingly complex world.

The work of archaeologist Mark Leone on the adaptation of the Georgian worldview in Annapolis, Maryland builds on the ideas introduced by Deetz but uses a Marxian framework to explore the catalyst for and power structures behind this ideological shift. Leone, (2003 [1988]) while agreeing that eighteenth-century changes in material culture reflect a change in worldview, critiqued Deetz for not addressing how the Georgian worldview spreads, why some aspects of material culture are affected before

others, and why the worldview is adopted in some communities but resisted elsewhere. By viewing capitalism “not as an economic system, but as a culture,” Leone (2003 [1988]: 237) examined patterns of wealth holding in Annapolis between 1690 and 1775 to determine that the culture of capitalism is deeply entwined with that of the Georgian worldview. He argued that the Annapolis elite used the consumption of specific material culture representative of the Georgian order and Enlightenment, including clocks, scientific instruments, individual table settings, and ordered landscapes, to demonstrate their superior understanding of the laws of nature and justify their unequal wealth and place at the top of the social hierarchy (Leone 2003 [1988]). Leone successfully illustrated how “the process of Georgianization is wedded to an ideology of individualism that was aimed at obscuring social relations, thereby allowing the ascendance of capitalism and the dominance of the elite” (Pogue 2001: 50).

The third theoretical explanation for the eighteenth-century shift in consumption was put forth by social historian Cary Carson (1994) and focuses on the power of material culture to mediate everyday social relationships. To Carson, this shift in material culture represents a “consumer revolution” that was ultimately the result of a broad social movement occurring in Britain and northern Europe that eventually “transformed much of the world from a condition of rudimentary tool users to one of social display, or consumerism” (Pogue 2001:51). According to Carson the “consumer revolution” refers to that:

“great transformation when whole nations learned to use a rich and complicated medium of communications to conduct social relations that were no longer

adequately served by parochial repertoires of words, gestures, and folk customs alone. Artifacts expanded the vocabulary of an international language that was learned and understood wherever fashion and gentility spread” (Carson 1994: 488).

Carson (1994) argues that the “consumer revolution” was caused by the shifting needs of displaced people to identify with strangers in their status group. Prior to 1600 the majority of Europeans lived their entire lives in small peasant communities where social status was determined by well established family reputations (Carson 1994). Under this system, material things were not used to determine their possessor’s social standing and the “rich and poor lived fundamentally alike, the only difference being that the one generally enjoyed more of the same than the other” (Carson 1994: 529).

However, beginning in the fifteenth century this system began to change. More and more Europeans began moving to larger cities and overseas colonies, far from the reach of their reputations (Carson 1994: 523). This increasing mobility of people created a need for a set of standardized and portable status markers (Carson 1994: 523).

Possessions, including fashionable furnishings and table wares, and the social performances associated with them, quickly replaced family reputation as universally recognized symbols to indicate one’s membership, or a desire for membership, in class conscious social groups (Carson 1994: 522). By the end of the seventeenth century more people began acquiring goods, using services, and participating in social and recreational activities in ways that were more class bound than culture bound (Carson 1994: 513).

Consumer goods were now used as both a shared symbol of group identity and as devices for social climbers to emulate in attempts to gain a higher status (Carson 1994: 522).

Pogue (2001: 53) argues that Carson's model of the consumer revolution is the best explanation for the cause of eighteenth-century material culture change and best suited to examine the regional developments of this trend. He issues a call to identify the factors that affected the adoption of consumer culture in specific locations in order to better understand the larger phenomenon of the consumer revolution (Pogue 2001).

Although widespread, the degree of participation in the consumer revolution was shaped by local conditions and vernacular traditions (Sweeny 1994: 2). Carson's ideas have prompted many historical archaeologists to use frameworks focused on consumerism or consumption to address regional variations of the consumer revolution and the nuanced social meanings behind fashionable material culture. It is with this theoretical basis that I will examine the difference in the consumer culture of late eighteenth century rural and urban South Carolina. Specifically I will draw from previous examinations that focus on individual consumer agency, conspicuous consumption, and signaling theory.

## **APPLICATIONS OF CONSUMERISM IN HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY**

Consumerism is defined as the "cultural relationship between humans and consumer goods and services, including behaviors, institutions, and ideas" (Martin 1993: 142). A framework based on consumerism, often used interchangeably with the terms consumption and materialism, has been implemented across disciplines to examine the complex relationships between people, ideas and objects (Martin 1993). Initially research on consumption and consumer choice was used by historical archaeologists to determine economic product values of artifacts (Miller 1980; 1991), market access (Lewis 1998;

1999), and socioeconomic status (Baugher and Venables 1987; Spencer-Wood 1987). However, too often these studies blindly equated social status with economic status and failed to question the effects of class and ethnicity on consumption choices (Cook et al. 1996: 51). Additionally a focus solely on economic status downplays the symbolic nature of consumption (Cook et al. 1996). Extensive focus has also been placed on the structural forces and ideological processes that drive consumption, such as marketing networks (Lewis 1998; 1999) and dominant ideologies (Deetz 1996[1977]; Leone 2003[1988]). These studies often fail to recognize the agency and conscious choices of individual consumers in opposition to those structural forces (Mullins 2001: 134).

Since the 1980's most archaeological investigations of consumption patterns began to echo the work on artifact style and switched focus to how objects are symbolic and communicative. These studies hold that the consumption of goods does not simply convey status, but is a continual process of self and collective identification (Mullins 2011). Researchers have begun exploring how people socialize material goods by actively defining their meanings (Mullins 2011). People acquire goods, to "confirm, display, accent, mask, and imagine who [they] are and who [they] wish to be" (Mullins 2011: 135). By examining consumption through the agency of consumers archaeologists can learn where the decision to consume originates (Cook et al. 1996).

Investigations of consumption that are in tune with consumer agency have explored why middling classes choose to emulate the material culture of higher classes (Bell 2002; Fitts 1999), how the elite use material culture to distance themselves from lower classes (Shackel 1993), how lower classes resisted power structures (Beaudry 1989), and how consumers used the display of specific material objects to consciously



signal their status to others (Galle 2010; Henry 1991). Although they tackle many different issues, all of these studies share an interest in the assertive style and symbolic nature of material goods and the social interactions entangled in the act of their consumption. In all of these contexts consumer goods are purposely chosen, manipulated, or ignored in order to fulfill particular social needs.

Henry (1991) views the act of consuming as a social behavior used to reach goals. She outlines four main aspects of consumer behavior, the decision to consume, acquisition or procurement, use, and post-use deposition (Henry 1991: 4). She argues that both external and internal forces influence a person's decision to consume (Henry 1991). External forces include those that are either directed to or actively sought out by the consumer, including characteristics of the product itself, such as price, availability, and promotion, as well as the characteristics of the consumer's socio-cultural environment, such as group membership (Henry 1991: 4-6). Consuming the appropriate material culture is one of the most important ways to signify membership in class, status, or ethnic groups (Henry 1991: 6). Although group belonging exerts powerful influence on an individual's consumption, the amount of group influence will vary based on other factors, creating some variability in individual expressions of a group's life style and material culture (Henry 1991). According to Henry (1991) the most influential sources of external consumer influence include family, friends, neighbors, opinion leaders, reference groups, social class, and subculture. Additionally, there are multiple internal influences on a person's decision to consume, including physiological needs, safety needs, and social needs (Henry 1991). Henry (1991) argues that the external influences can be observed

archaeologically, but internal influences are nearly impossible for researchers to uncover without historical documents that specifically address those needs.

Jillian E. Galle (2010) purposes the application of the evolutionary approach of signaling theory, as outlined by anthropologists Bliege Bird and Smith (2005), to the historical archaeological record to illuminate the contextual influences behind consumer choices. Signaling theory builds on the ideas of conspicuous consumption, first proposed by economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen (1994 [1899]) in his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, and theories of symbolic capital proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (1977) in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Bliege Bird and Smith 2005). Veblen argues that the conspicuous consumption of goods and leisure time was used as a form of costly signaling to indicate a person's wealth and social status and to gain competitive advantage over others (Bliege Bird and Smith 2005: 222). Bourdieu argued that seemingly irrational expenditures of time, energy, or money can be used by individuals to acquire symbolic capital to increase their prestige in a community (Bliege Bird and Smith 2005: 223).

Influenced equally by conspicuous consumption, symbolic capital, and behavioral ecology, signaling theory “contends that costly displays successfully transmit information that is vital to establishing and maintaining relationships, especially in large-scale, complex social environments” (Galle 2010: 21). Signals convey useful information to receivers, who then decode the signal to decide what type of benefits, such as social status, economic partnerships, or social alliances, they aim to gain by interacting with the signaler (Galle 2010: 21). Costly signaling, or the choice to use a high cost signal, such as expensive imported tablewares, guarantees honesty in competitive contexts by keeping

out those signalers who cannot afford this costly display (Galle 2010: 22). Ultimately choosing to signal to a group of strangers will have a higher payoff than signaling to those more familiar (Galle 2010: 22).

The form of the signal is the result of individual choices influenced by the signaler's particular cultural and historical contexts (Galle 2010: 22). Galle (2010) applies the theory of costly signaling to the historical context of the "consumer revolution" arguing that the acquisition and use of the period's ever more numerous consumer goods acted as a signal to communicate social identities. According to Galle (2010: 23) "rapidly changing demographic and social conditions during the last half of the eighteenth century increased the payoffs to signaling for people at all levels, especially as individuals had opportunities to interact with large groups of unfamiliar people."

Although Galle's (2010) research focuses on the use of material culture by slaves in the colonial Chesapeake, the same ideas of costly signaling can be applied to South Carolina's urban and rural elite, who were well known for their habit of conspicuous consumption. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, South Carolina's rapid economic growth during the mid to late eighteenth century caused the development of a distinct consumer culture characterized by heavy consumption of fashionable goods by the elite, to which the Brewton and Motte family belonged. The reasons for these intense consumption habits are best explained by viewing the use of particular material culture as a way to signal group identity. The exploration of the degree of consumption and costly signaling used by an elite family in both urban and rural settings can shed light on the variation in social relationships within colonial South Carolina.

## REGIONAL VARIATION IN COLONIAL CONSUMER CULTURE

A theoretical framework centered on consumer agency, conspicuous consumption, and costly signaling can be used to explore the regional differences in consumer culture and participation in the consumer revolution. To fully understand the ways in which colonial South Carolina's urban and rural elite used material culture to communicate and signal their status, we must first understand the contextual differences, both geographic and cultural, between urban and backcountry life. Essential to this understanding are the current theoretical perspectives on frontier regions. Frontier or backcountry regions are traditionally viewed as the area on the periphery of a colonial settlement which serves as a territorial marker and meeting place between peoples (Lightfoot and Martinez 1995). Although the archaeological study of frontier regions has been essential to the field, the theoretical perspectives guiding frontier studies have varied through time.

Modern frontier studies began in 1893 when historian Frederick Jackson Turner outlined his "frontier hypothesis" in an essay entitled *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (Turner and Simonson 1990). Turner's hypothesis emphasized the importance of the frontier and western expansion in creating a unique American culture, stating that "the existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development" (Turner and Simonson 1990: 27). Turner viewed the frontier as a location where "American social development has been continuously beginning over and over again," (Turner and Simonson 1990: 28) where a European culture was broken down and transformed into a new and distinct American social order through interactions with a strange environment,

isolation from the social controls of the East and contributions from the diverse groups who settled there (Turner and Simonson 1990).

Turner's hypothesis, while extremely popular at the time and successful in spurring an interest in frontier studies by both historians and scholars in other fields, including anthropology, archaeology and geography, has since been heavily criticized. Although Turner's work is now seen as an Anglo-centric and imperialist narrative of pioneer progress and Indian retreat, it has not been completely abandoned, but instead frontiers have been reconstructed as areas of cultural contact, cohabitation, creolization, and social fluidity (Adelman and Aron 1999; Cobb 2008; Lightfoot and Martinez 1995; Naum 2010; Oatis 2004; Parker and Rodseth 2005; Zierden 2002). The frontier in its most general definition is a "meeting place of peoples in which geographic and cultural borders are not clearly defined" (Adelman and Aron 1999: 815). Due to the constant cultural contact and interaction occurring within these regions, the frontier can be a "shifting zone of innovation and recombination through which cultural materials from many sources have been unpredictably channeled and transformed" into something new (Parker and Rodseth 2005: 4).

The work of archaeologists has contributed greatly to frontier studies. Since the introduction of Turner's hypothesis, frontiers have been examined by both prehistoric and historical archaeologists focusing on periods of colonization and contact. According to Naum (2010: 105), historical archaeology is especially useful for understanding frontier relationships because of its ability to combine multiple lines of evidence, such as historical documents, oral sources, and material culture, which can permit "a fuller

picture of past realities, one that is not based on the political visions of the leaders but also indicates glimpses of the experience of the common frontier inhabitants.”

Within archaeology a core-periphery model defined frontier studies from the 1970’s until the 1990’s (Lightfoot and Martinez 1995). This model emphasized the relationships between a core settlement and colonial daughter communities located on the periphery of the civilization (Lightfoot and Martinez 1995). Proponents of this model believe that it is these relationships that structure economic, political and social change in the frontier (Lightfoot and Martinez 1995).

Historical archaeologist, Kenneth Lewis (1998; 1999) applied the core-periphery model to the study of the South Carolina frontier town of Camden and its relationship with the core city of Charleston. Lewis believed there was a hierarchy of settlements within an area of colonization focused around their connection to a core city or “entrepôt,” Charleston, in the case of South Carolina (Lewis 1998: 88). The size and function of these settlements decrease as their access to the core city, through transportation and communication, increases (Lewis 1998). Frontier economies and culture, while originally centered on self-sufficient and insular, house-hold based economic practices, begin to change as connections with the core settlement increase and the frontier economy becomes increasingly reliant on the world market (Lewis 1998). These changes can be observed in the growth of central backcountry towns, such as Camden, as they became hubs for interior trade and vital connections to the core (Lewis 1998). Increased influence of the core city and the capitalist economy in general also altered the material culture of the backcountry (Lewis 1998). This change is represented by an increase in the “acquisition and display of wealth as an indicator of differential

social standing among late frontier households” that was used to emulate the refinement and gentility present in core cities (Lewis 1999: 8).

While useful for understanding relationships and culture flow within a colonial settlement, core-periphery models have been heavily criticized for their tendency to “marginalize the critical role that colonial-indigenous interactions can play in cultural transformations” (Lightfoot and Martinez: 1995: 475). In the core-periphery framework, culture change is seen as being completely insular, with innovations radiating from the dominant core to passive periphery settlements, ignoring the importance of external culture contact in shaping cultural change (Lightfoot and Martinez 1995). The use of core-periphery models has also been criticized for the tendency to approach frontier studies with a macroscale analysis focused on the broad economic and political infrastructures influencing core-periphery relations, while ignoring microscale issues of individual intentionality and social action, cultural construction of gender, and other ideologies (Lightfoot and Martinez 1995: 447). In contrast, Lightfoot and Martinez (1995: 472) view frontiers as “front lines in the creolization and syncretization of cultural constructs in culture contact situations” and believe that to overcome the problems with the core-periphery model archaeologists must begin to investigate frontiers as “zones of cultural interfaces in which cross-cutting and overlapping social units can be defined and recombined at different spatial and temporal scales of analysis.”

Within the past few decades researchers (Hauser and Armstrong 2012; Stoler 1989; Voss 2005, 2008) have shifted their focus from a core-periphery or colonizer-colonized dichotomy and have begun to explore the range of experiences of European colonizers. Anthropologist Ann Stoler (1989: 135) believed that many scholars had

unquestioningly “taken colonialism and its European agents as an abstract force, as a structure imposed on local practice” and encouraged the search for signs of diversity, resistance, and new constructions of European-ness within colonial communities. Stoler (1989) studied two nineteenth century Dutch colonial communities in Sumatra to illustrate how social differences within and between the communities lead to competing colonial agendas that influenced the politics of Dutch colonial rule.

Mark Hauser and Douglas Armstrong (2012: 313) examined variation in colonial frontier lifeways in their work on eighteenth century plantation settlements on the Caribbean islands of St. John and Dominica, arguing that “colonialism was not a homogenous historical force, but an ambiguous assemblage of local traditions and trajectories.” They believe that in addition to formal urban centers and planned frontier outposts, there also existed colonial settlements operating outside of direct control of the mother country’s administration (Hauser and Armstrong 2012). The inhabitants of these outlying areas did not view themselves as part of frontier colonies, but used construction, agriculture and trade to redefine the terms under which they interacted with or ignored colonial administrators (Hauser and Armstrong 2012: 311). The authors believe the study of settlements like these can allow archaeologists to explore the degree to which individual agency can create variation in colonial life and material culture (Hauser and Armstrong 2012).

Archaeologist Barbara Voss (2005: 462) stresses that a focus on a colonizer-colonized dichotomy has “masked the differences in social identities within each group” and that other factors like nationality, religion, sex, class, and age have more influence on social differentiation in colonial settings. She conducted archaeological excavations at the



Spanish colonial military outpost of El Presidio de San Francisco to understand the changing social identification of colonizers (Voss 2005; 2008). The Presido de San Francisco was founded through the relocation of previously colonized peoples from Mexico, who were of low rank in the Spanish social hierarchy, the sistema de castas, to serve as colonizers of California (Voss 2005; 2008). Using a combination of historical and archaeological evidence, Voss concludes that equalizing institutional controls and a desire to remain separate from Native Californians shaped the material practices of the military settlers of el Persido de San Francisco and caused them to abandon the sistema de castas and create a new, shared Californio ethnicity (2005; 2008). These studies show that the experiences of colonists and their relationships and attitudes toward their mother country vary greatly. Other researchers have studied how colonists in both urban and frontier regions have utilized material culture differently to express their varying experiences and achieve social goals.

Shackel (1993; 1994) studied eighteenth century Annapolis, Maryland and its surrounding rural communities in an attempt to understand how material goods were used by the elite to create identity and maintain intergroup and intragroup relationships. He argues that during times of social and political stress or economic crisis, like the period preceding the American Revolution, the elite “altered their consumption patterns and began to acquire new and different types of goods to symbolically differentiate themselves from the lower groups” (Shackel 1993: 73). Georgian material culture, such as matching sets of tablewares and formal dining items, and the behavior associated with it was used by the gentry to rationalize and solidify their position in society (Shackel 1993). However, when comparing material culture of Annapolis to rural Maryland, he

found that the social distancing practice of the elite was more common in the more socially competitive city than rural areas (Shackel 1993).

Pavo-Zuckerman and Loren (2012) also addressed the differences in material goods used in frontier versus urban occupations, but unlike Shackel, found a continuation of distancing behavior on the frontier. Focusing on the Spanish colonial frontier settlement of Presidio Los Adaes, the authors compare faunal and ceramic archaeological data with ethnohistorical accounts and casta paintings to discuss diet, and ceramic consumption among different casta classes on the frontier (Pavo-Zuckerman and Loren 2012). The authors used the ethnohistorical data to create a sense of the ideal urban, elite lifestyle and used the archaeological data to test if this ideal was being successfully performed on the frontier (Pavo-Zuckerman and Loren 2012). Their zooarchaeological data demonstrated that in the frontier, diet was similar among all social classes, and thus the elite's lifestyle ideal was not being upheld (Pavo-Zuckerman and Loren 2012). However, ceramic data indicated that frontier elites continued to consume the high status ceramics represented by the ideal to distance themselves from lower classes (Pavo-Zuckerman and Loren 2012).

Although these examples come from a variety of regions and time periods, theories of consumerism and colonial variation can also be used to explain specific regional patterns, such as those in colonial South Carolina. A variation in colonial experiences, consumer goods, and the social relationships they create and mediate should be observable between London, urban colonial settlements such as Charleston, and rural Carolina backcountry settlements.

## **DIFFERENCES IN CONSUMER CHOICE IN COLONIAL SOUTH CAROLINA**

The southern colonial backcountry refers to the upland frontier regions of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia as well as pockets of Tennessee (Crass et al. 1998). This was a region of secondary European settlement, beginning in the early eighteenth century, after the initial colonization of the coast (Crass et al. 1998). The backcountry was characterized by a multiracial and multiethnic society and remained culturally distinct from the heavily populated lowcountry until the nineteenth century (Crass et al. 1998). The majority of the initial backcountry residents established small self-sufficient farmsteads and owned only a small number of slaves (Beck 1998: 112). Intimate relationships between Europeans, Native Americans, and African Americans often developed and were, to some degree, tolerated in the early colonial backcountry (Beck 1998: 112). However, this social tolerance became strained in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as frontier residents became more reliant on a market economy and tried to create a more organized social community (Beck 1998: 113).

Although distinct from the lowcountry, backcountry regions maintained important relationships with their colony's coastal urban centers. Within South Carolina, Charleston served as a mediator between the wider Atlantic world and the backcountry (Hudgins 1999). As the colony's only outlet to the fashions of London and the rest of Europe, Charleston's economic, political and social influence was strong in its surrounding rural regions (Hudgins 1999). Studies of South Carolina's backcountry have attempted to determine just how strong the influence of Charleston was and what differences exist between backcountry and lowcountry lifeways and material culture use.

Archaeologists Crass, Penner and Forehand (1999) examined the relationship between Charleston and the backcountry in their research of the frontier settlement of

New Windsor Township. The authors utilized archaeological data, probate inventories and letters to dispute various traveler's accounts and historiographic portrayals of the colonial backcountry as a region populated by people lacking manners, social refinement, and consumer goods, arguing that a code of gentility, and the material culture associated with it, did exist in New Windsor (Crass et al. 1999). Gentility is represented by a set of refined behaviors that began to spread from England to America in the eighteenth century (Crass et al. 1999: 15). This code of gentility is heavily reliant on luxury material culture such as mansions, tea wares, silver cutlery, and mahogany tables (Crass et al. 1999: 15). To examine the presence of gentility in the backcountry, the authors contrast aspects of backcountry material culture with that of Charleston (Crass et al. 1999). A similarity of material culture would indicate the presence of gentility; dissimilarity would demonstrate that the backcountry lacked the same refinement as urban centers.

Crass, Penner and Forehand's (1999: 16-18) study focuses on middle class, yeoman plantations owned by individuals of both German-Swiss and British descent. The probate inventories examined were divided in to four wealth groups and searched for the presence or absence of twelve luxury items, including fine earthenware, clocks, silver plates, spices, and books (Crass et al. 1999: 18). Results indicated that high status consumer goods associated with genteel behavior were present in many of the New Windsor households and fairly equally distributed throughout the township (Crass et al. 1999: 25).

In addition to probate data, archaeological remains from three yeomen plantations in or near New Windsor Township were examined and compared with contemporary archaeological data from Charleston (Crass et al. 1999: 21). The archaeological material

culture of the backcountry sites was remarkably similar to that found in Charleston, lacking only a similar frequency of porcelain, personal items, such as buttons, and furniture hardware (Crass et al. 1999: 23-25). All of this evidence seems to indicate that there existed a “backcountry subculture in which there *were* materially discernible social classes, defined at least in part by Charleston and the ideas of gentility it projected” (Crass et al. 1999: 26).

Groover and Brooks (2003) examined the material culture of cattle raisers in the South Carolina backcountry. Through the archaeological examination of the Howell site and the Catherine Brown Cowpen, the authors argue that although the homes of backcountry residents were smaller and less refined than their urban counterparts, they possessed a similar access to a broad range of imported, consumer goods, such as tableware and tobacco pipes (Groover and Brooks 2003). However, despite this access to European goods, locally made ceramics like colonoware were equally prevalent on these two sites, demonstrating that cultural interaction also heavily influenced the material culture of backcountry residents (Groover and Brooks 2003).

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of the literature on both consumerism and frontier theory. A combination of these two perspectives can work together to explain the multi-staged variation of colonial experiences from mother country, urban colonial city, and the colonial frontier. Eighteenth-century colonial America is characterized by a dramatic shift in material culture that is best explained through Carson’s (1994) ideas on the consumer revolution that focus on the communicative power of material culture. This time period is also characterized by intense colonial expansion into frontier and

backcountry regions. The variation in colonial experiences in these regions created situations in which the consumption of material culture could be used to obtain many different social outcomes.

In particular, the application of theories of conspicuous consumption and signaling theory can help explain the social reasons behind a potential difference in the ceramic assemblages of the Motte family's urban and rural occupation. I will argue that elite South Carolina families actively chose material culture to signal their identity and mediate social relationships. The tenets of signaling theory hold that the elite Motte family would have utilized specific types and styles of material culture to signify their group membership and high status, both to fellow group members and lower classes. The comparison of the ceramic assemblages of the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation will explore the degree to which costly signaling was utilized in each region.

## CHAPTER 4

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD AND LABORATORY METHODOLOGY

This chapter will describe the field and laboratory methodology used to produce the two ceramic collections compared in this analysis. The data for this thesis came from the archaeological assemblages of two separate sites, the Miles Brewton House, originally excavated by The Charleston Museum, and Mount Joseph Plantation/Fort Motte, excavated by the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA). Both sites were excavated over multiple field seasons, the Miles Brewton House from 1988 to 1990 and Mount Joseph Plantation/Fort Motte from 2004 to 2013. Here I will summarize the excavation methods and findings at each site and the methodology used to process and analyze their artifact assemblages, specifically the methods used to choose and analyze their late eighteenth century ceramic assemblages. The limitations of the analysis and comparison of the two sites' ceramic assemblages will also be discussed.

#### **THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE MILES BREWTON HOUSE**

Archaeological investigations at 27 King Street, also known as the Miles Brewton House, were conducted by The Charleston Museum by invitation of the house's then owner, Peter Manigault, to assist with his planned restoration of the house (Zierden 2001: 3). The current Miles Brewton House lot measures 100 feet along the west side of King

Street and 185 feet deep, and is enclosed by eight to ten foot high brick walls on all sides (Zierden 2001: 5). The complex consists of the main brick, two-story, Georgian double house, a service yard, associated outbuildings, and multiple formal gardens (Zierden 2001: 5). The outbuildings date to various occupation eras of the house and include a carriage house, stables, tack rooms, and two structures with unknown functions believed to have once been a 19<sup>th</sup> century servants quarter and a privy original to the house (Zierden 2001: 5-7).

Formal archaeological investigations began in February 1988 and were conducted in two phases (Zierden 2001: 3). The first phase was designed to investigate areas of interest to the restoration architects and addresses questions concerning the architectural evolution of the main house and outbuildings (Zierden 2001: 3). This phase lasted from February through May of 1988 (Zierden 2001: 3). The second phase, conducted between November 1989 and March 1990, was centered on mitigating the effects of the installation of a heating and cooling system that would involve extensive trenching across the house's yard (Zierden 2001: 3). Although the project was initiated through restoration and mitigation efforts, The Charleston Museum also conducted their excavations with the research goal of investigating a variety of questions pertinent to the archaeology of Charleston, including site formation processes, subsistence strategies, socioeconomic status, rural-urban contrasts, gender and ethnic identification, and spatial patterning in the urban landscape (Zierden 2001: 11).

In 1988 multiple 5 by 5, 2.5 by 2.5 and 2 by 5 foot units were placed throughout the yard area of the Miles Brewton House complex (Figure 4.1) (Zierden 2001: 44). Excavations were conducted by hand with shovels and trowels and all materials were



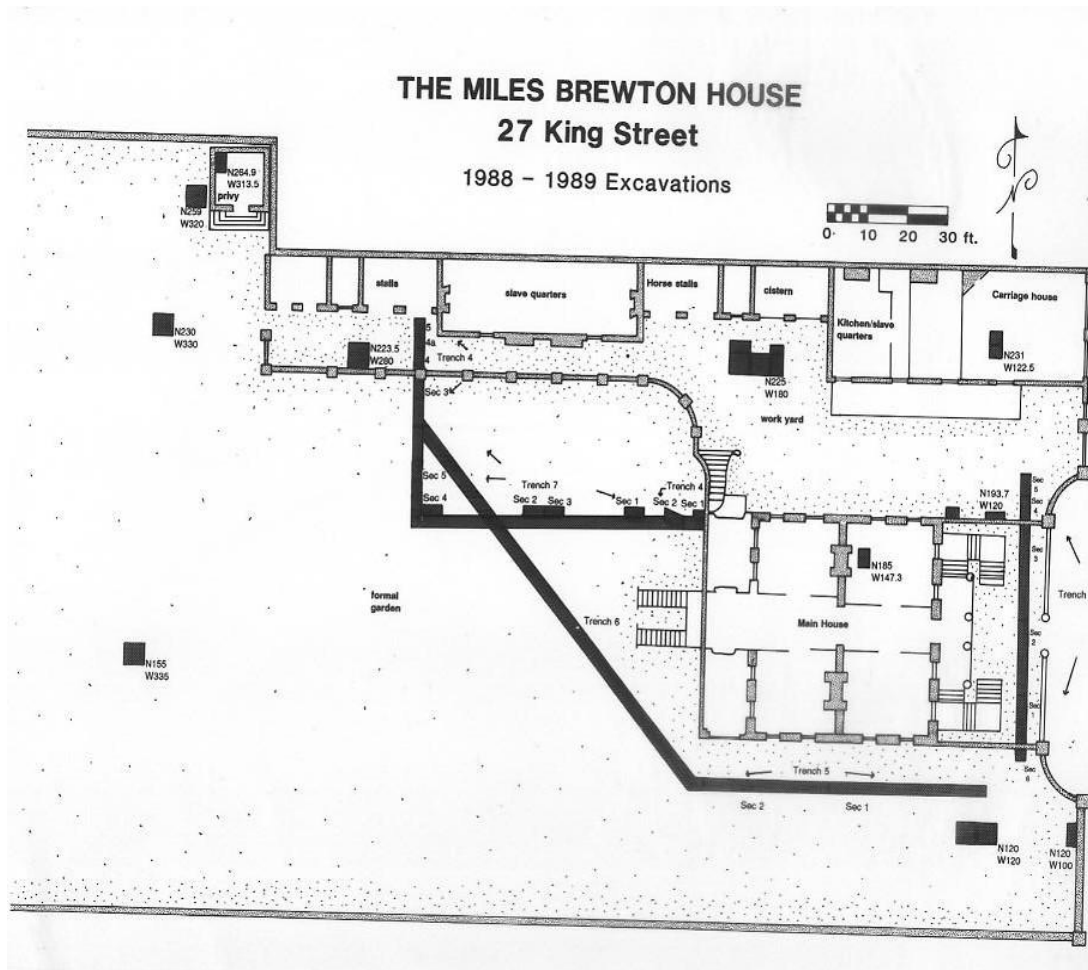


Figure 4.1 Miles Brewton House Excavations, courtesy of the Charleston Museum

water screened through a ¼ inch mesh (Zierden 2001: 44). Eighteen units were excavated resulting in over 150 separate proveniences and 28 features (Zierden 2001: 44).

Excavations began in the south side yard to determine the function of this area and resulted in the discovery of a construction refuse pit dating to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and domestic refuse pit from the 1760's (Zierden 2001: 45). Units were placed in the rear yard to determine the nature and depth of the area's stratigraphy and explore the function of the unknown outbuildings (Zierden 2001: 47-48). Two small units were placed in the front courtyard, between the entrance to the house and the carriage house, to test its

stratigraphy for comparison with the back courtyard and to determine construction sequences (Zeiriden 2001: 62). Other units were placed beneath, within or adjacent to standing structures to determine and date the evolution of the landscape (Zierden 2001: 65). Excavations of the work yard, the area behind the kitchen/carriage house, and the area between the stables and main house were conducted to explore refuse disposal and activity concentrations (Zierden 2001: 49).

The 1989 field work consisted of hand excavations of sections of the proposed trenches to be dug for the installation of a heating and cooling unit (Zierden 2001: 70). The trenches measured 2.5 feet in width and 4 feet in depth and would encircle the main house and extend diagonally across the garden area (Zierden 2001: 70). Some sections of the trenches were hand excavated and material screened through a 1/4 inch mesh, while other portions of the trenches were dug by laborers with archaeologists monitoring to collect samples and map specific proveniences (Zierden 2001: 70). A total of 285 cubic feet of soil was removed in controlled excavations resulting in 198 separate proveniences and 25 additional features (Zierden 2001: 71).

### **THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF MOUNT JOSEPH PLANTATION/FORT MOTTE (32CL1)**

The remains of Mount Joseph Plantation and Fort Motte are located in Calhoun County, South Carolina on a high prominence overlooking the Congaree River (Smith et al. 2007). The entire site, including the archaeological remains of the plantation house and fort, outbuildings, and various military features and encampments, is currently situated on property owned by Mr. Luther Wannamaker and encompasses 298.58 acres. In 1909 the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) placed a monument on the

property to commemorate the location of Fort Motte (Smith et al. 2007). The site was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 (Smith et al. 2007).

Archaeological investigations of Mount Joseph Plantation and Fort Motte (38CL1) have been conducted by the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology from 2004 through 2013. The project began in 2004 with the goal of revising the site's National Register of Historic Places nomination to include the entire Fort Motte battlefield (Figure 4.2) and reassess the entire site's historic significance (Smith et al. 2007: 1). Preliminary research efforts began in the spring of 2004 with a random surface collection and an informal ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey in the area immediately surrounding DAR monument (Smith et al. 2007: 35). A dense surface scatter of eighteenth century artifacts confirmed that this was indeed the location of the mansion house and subsequent fort (Smith et al. 2007).

Formal investigations commenced in October of 2004, beginning with systematic metal detecting and GPR surveys (Smith et al. 2007: 35). The most extensive field effort of the initial project was the systematic metal detecting survey. Approximately four acres in and around the fort were metal detected in hopes of revealing the fort, the Motte house, the British camp, and any outbuildings (Smith et al. 2007: 4). Following the established site grid, metal detector operators walked overlapping transects approximately 1.5 meters wide (Smith et al. 2007: 4). Metal detector readings were excavated immediately and all artifacts (excluding those dating later than the eighteenth century) were collected (Smith et al. 2007: 4). Additional reconnaissance level metal detection survey was conducted in areas of the property beyond the boundaries of the fort in hopes of identifying encampments associated with the battle and remains of the plantation's outbuildings,

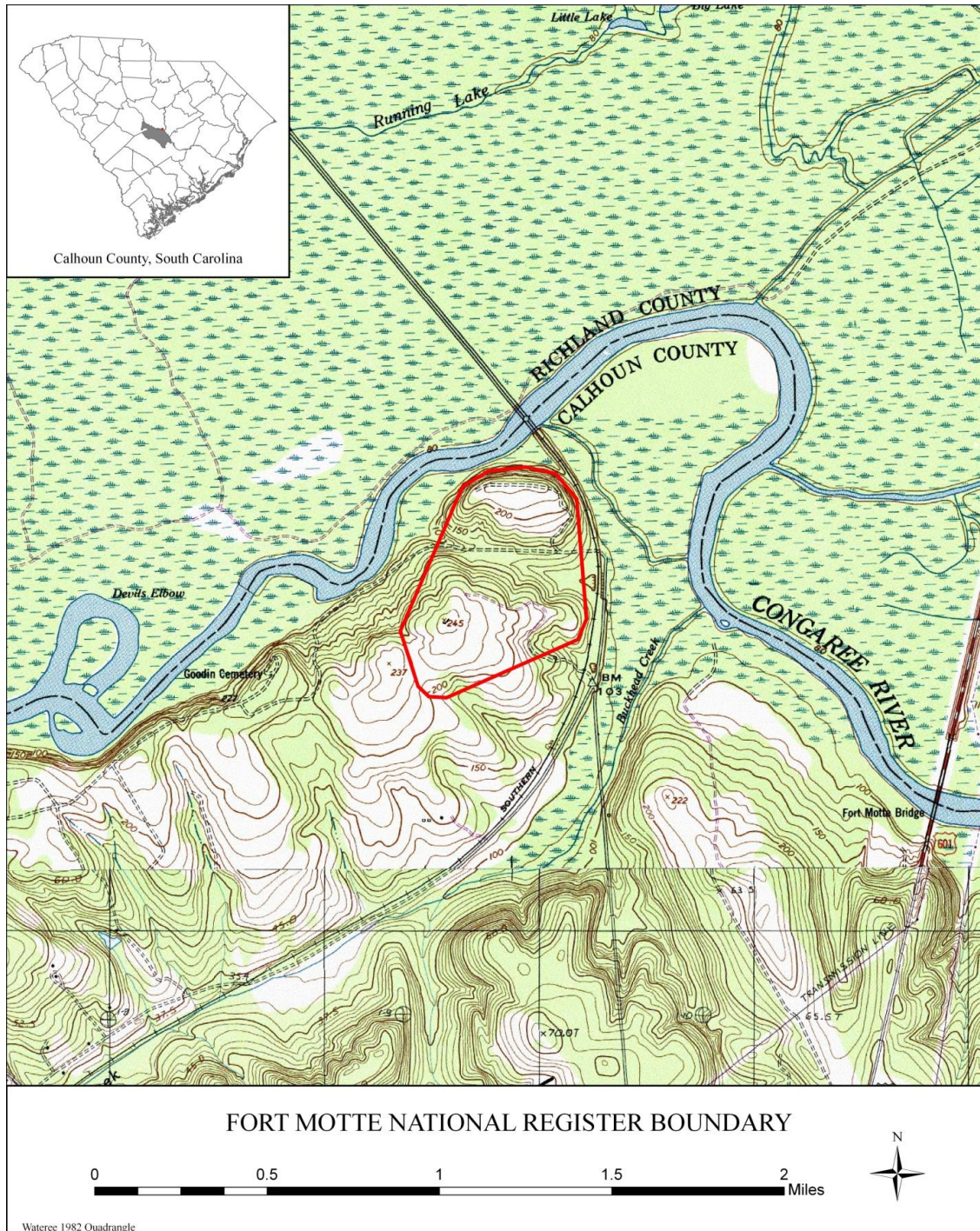


Figure 4.2 National Register of Historic Places Boundary of Fort Motte (courtesy of SCIAA)

including a farm house occupied by the Motte family during the siege (Smith et al. 2007).

Once the location of Fort Motte had been confirmed by the various survey methods, trenches were opened in the area to explore the extent of the fort's ditch and assess its archaeological integrity (Smith et al. 2007: 42). Trenches varied from 50 centimeters, 1 meter, and 1.5 meters in width in order to best observe the ditch feature (Smith et al. 2007: 43). The plow zone soil was removed but not screened, as it contained mostly nineteenth century artifacts which were not considered useful to the project's goals (Smith et al. 2007: 43). Once the ditch was identified with trenching, a 1 meter wide perpendicular cross section of the feature was completely excavated to understand the ditch profile (Smith et al. 2007: 44). The feature fill from the cross section was screened, although artifacts were sparse throughout (Smith et al. 2007: 44).

In May of 2012 archaeologists from SCIAA and students from the University of South Carolina returned to Fort Motte to gather further information about the battle (Whitacre 2013: 80). Investigations included an additional systematic metal detector survey in the immediate vicinity of the fort and excavations of five 1x1 meter and 24 1x2 meter units across the fort area (Whitacre 2013). During metal detection only artifacts dating to the eighteenth century were collected (Whitacre 2013). The units were excavated in arbitrary 10 centimeter levels down to the base of feature level with the goal of photographing and recording both domestic and battle related features (Whitacre 2013). All soils were screened with a quarter inch mesh, including those from the plow zone, and all artifacts were collected (Whitacre 2013).



During the summer of 2013 excavations continued at Fort Motte as part of a joint project between Dr. Steven D. Smith and myself with the goal of uncovering more information about the Brewton and Motte families' Mount Joseph occupation and specifically to recover additional eighteenth century ceramics to be used in this analysis. A total of 14 1x2 meter and one 2x2 meter units were excavated in the area surrounding the location of the plantation house and subsequent fort. The units were excavated in arbitrary 10 centimeter levels to the base of the feature level. All of the soil was screened through a quarter inch mesh and all artifacts were collected.

Although the majority of the excavations were focused on the battle at Fort Motte, much was also revealed about the Motte domestic component. The location of the house was confirmed by a dense and well defined distribution of surface and subterranean artifacts, including historic ceramics, bottle glass, window glass, nails, brick fragments, and delft tile. Excavations have also provided evidence about the mansion's architecture. The initial GPR survey and trench excavations located a number of anomalies and features within the boundaries fort ditch that could relate to the mansion, but these features have not been excavated at this time (Smith et al. 2007:45). In addition to these features, the 2013 excavations uncovered the remains of the mansion's east and west chimneys.

In the 2004 field season a brick feature, believed to be either a chimney base or brick capped cellar was discovered directly north of the DAR monument (Smith et al. 2007). A 2x2 meter unit was opened in this location to further explore this feature, but time constraints prevented its full excavation (Smith et al. 2007). However, this unit was reopened during the 2013 field season. Once excavation began and a layer of brick rubble

at the top of the feature was removed, a series of articulated brick was exposed, indicating that this feature was indeed a chimney base. This chimney is believed to be located on the eastern end of the Motte mansion, and measures 250 by 130 centimeters.

Since drawings of the Motte mansion indicated that the structure was symmetrical and contained two chimneys, exploratory shovel tests were dug along a line that followed the orientation of the east chimney westward in order to expose a possible second chimney. Articulated brick and stone was located approximately 14.6 meters (48 feet) from the northern exterior corner of the east chimney and three 1x2 units were opened to fully expose this feature. Due to frequent plowing this chimney base was less intact than the base to the east, but the general outline was still clear. The dimensions for the western chimney are 255 by 125 centimeters.

Excavations have also resulted in a comprehensive understanding of the architecture of Fort Motte and the landscape of its surrounding battle ground. The 2004 and 2005 investigations verified the general location and size of the ditch portion of the fort with that of a 1781 plan of the fortification (Smith et al. 2007: 50). The ditch was found to be generally square in shape and 9.2 to 9.8 feet wide and 5.6 to 5.9 feet deep (Smith et al. 2007: 50). Distributions of ammunition specimens recovered throughout the project provided detailed evidence of the military logistics and tactics employed during the siege of the fort (Smith et al. 2007, Whitacre 2013). Reconnaissance level metal detection and some small scale excavation have also identified other sites associated with the battle including what is believed to be a camp occupied by either British or American troops approximately 100 to 400 meters southwest of the fort (Jim Legg, personal

communication, October 30, 2014). During the 2013 season the American approach trench, or sap, was located and portions of the possible overseer's house were excavated.

As of 2013, a total of 7,945 artifacts have been uncovered in the immediate vicinity of the Mount Joseph plantation house/Fort Motte (provenience areas 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 17, 21, 22). Although many of these artifacts relate to the battle, such as lead shot and gun fragments, most are the result of a domestic occupation. Artifacts related to the house's architecture, such as window glass, nails, and brick fragments, represent the largest artifact group (n=5,562) followed by ceramics (n=1,160), and container glass (n=519). The earliest historic period artifact in the house collections is an English "Rose Americana" halfpenny dating to 1722, although most artifacts were diagnostic of the late eighteenth through mid nineteenth centuries. The diagnostically eighteenth century artifacts are likely a result of the Motte occupation, although some could have belonged to the British troops who occupied the area from January to May of 1781. Overall, the Motte era artifacts are only a small portion of the assemblage which is dominated by artifacts dating to the antebellum nineteenth century and subsequent owners of the property.

#### **LABORATORY METHODS AND CERAMIC ANALYSIS**

The artifacts from the Miles Brewton House excavations had been previously washed, analyzed, and cataloged by The Charleston Museum. For basic descriptive purposes the artifacts were sorted into functional categories based on South's (1977) Carolina Artifact Pattern (Zierden 2001). All ceramics were identified by ware type, decoration, and when possible, vessel form (Zierden 2001). Cross mends and vessel matches were noted (Zierden 2001). Following artifact analysis, each excavated



provenience was then given a terminus post quem (TPQ) date based on the artifact from its assemblage with the most recent date range (Zierden 2001). A provenience guide lists a total of 102 separate proveniences dating to the time period that the Brewton and Motte families would have been associated with the house, from 1750 through approximately 1790 (Zierden 2001: 92-99). The ceramics from these proveniences, a total of 2,746, were chosen for further analysis and comparison.

I chose to physically reexamine these ceramics rather than just rely on the information in the existing catalog records for two reasons. The first was to become more visually familiar with the collection in order to better notice similarities and differences from the Mount Joseph Plantation collection. The second was because 23 years have passed since the original excavations at the Miles Brewton House and some records were missing or did not identify as many ceramic attributes as needed for this analysis. The ceramic artifacts from each of these proveniences were reexamined and cross checked with their original catalog entry, if one existed. Following reanalysis, these ceramics were recorded in a new digital catalog created in a Microsoft Excel database and identified by ceramic material, ware type, decoration, and when possible, vessel form.

All artifacts from the 2004-2012 Mount Joseph Plantation/Fort Motte excavations had been previously washed, analyzed, and cataloged by SCIAA personnel. Artifacts from the 2013 excavations were washed, analyzed, and cataloged by myself with the assistance of SCIAA archaeologist Jim Legg. A master catalog for all Fort Motte field seasons was created at this time within a Microsoft Excel database. All artifacts in the master catalog were assigned to functional groups and classes based on South's (1977) Carolina Artifact Pattern. These categories were chosen for organizational and sorting purposes only and

were not used in any interpretations. Additionally, all ceramics were identified in the catalog by ceramic material, ware type, decoration, and when possible, vessel form. A total of 1,160 ceramics were recovered from the area immediately surrounding the architectural remains of Mount Joseph Plantation. Of these only 394 date to the late eighteenth century and were chosen for further analysis and comparison.

Resources used for ceramic analysis and identification include Hume (1969), Ardent, et al. (2013a-2013e), Aultman, et al. (2013), Towner (1978), Atterbury (1978), and digital type collections from the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab (2002) and the Florida Museum of Natural History (2013). The ceramic analysis performed involved the identification of four main attributes, ceramic material, ware type, decoration, and vessel form. Ceramic material, coarse earthenware, refined earthenware, stoneware, or porcelain, refers to manufacturing and firing technique of the vessel. Coarse earthenwares are low fired and have porous clay bodies with visible inclusions (Aultman et al. 2013). Refined earthenwares, developed by English potters in the mid-eighteenth century, are harder and denser than coarse earthenwares and often cream colored and lead glazed (Aultman et al. 2013). Tin enameled wares, such as Delft, are also included in this category. Stonewares are impervious to liquids and often salt-glazed (Aultman et al. 2013). Porcelain, the most highly fired ceramic material, is impervious to liquids, nearly vitrified, and generally translucent (Aultman et al. 2013).

In addition to ceramic material attributes, each sherd was identified by the historically documented ware type it belonged to, such as creamware, pearlware, or white salt-glazed stoneware. The decoration of each sherd was also described by technique (hand painted, transfer print, molded, etc), color, and pattern or motif (bead and reel, blue

shell edged, blue willow, etc.). When possible each ceramic fragment was identified by vessel form or function. These forms include teaware, tableware, or utilitarian. Teawares include ceramics related to the ritual of drinking and were made in porcelain, delftware, refined earthenwares, white salt glazed stoneware, and other finely-turned stonewares (Aultman et al. 2013: 8). Tablewares, such as plates, soup bowls and serving vessels, refer to ceramics used for food service and consumption (Aultman et al. 2013: 9). Utilitarian vessels are used for food production and storage and are usually made from coarse earthenware or stoneware (Aultman et al. 2013: 9-10).

#### **LIMITATIONS TO ANALYSIS**

The excavation history and nature of the artifact of assemblages of the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation resulted in two very different samples which create some limitations to analysis. The first limitation occurs due to the differences in site preservation and excavation methods. The Miles Brewton House site is located in a city lot that has never been subjected to plowing and has witnessed relatively little landscape alteration since the eighteenth century (Zierden 2001). Thanks to this degree of preservation, the majority of the ceramics analyzed from the Miles Brewton collection were recovered from sealed strata or features that have been reliably dated to the late eighteenth century. There is little doubt that these ceramics were deposited during the period in which Miles Brewton and Rebecca Motte would have owned the house.

The remains of Mount Joseph Plantation, however, are located on farm land that has been extensively plowed throughout the years making it difficult to determine strictly eighteenth century contexts. Additionally, only a few of the Motte house's domestic features, mainly the two chimney bases, have been excavated. To date, all of the ceramics

analyzed from the Mount Joseph Plantation collection were either surface finds, found in metal detector hits, or recovered from plowzone contexts. Ceramics were chosen for analysis, not because they were found in a definitively eighteenth century context, but because their mean ceramic date fell within the eighteenth century. It is likely that the majority of these ceramics belonged to the Motte family, but it is also possible that they belonged to the property's subsequent owners, especially wares with later TPQ dates, such as creamware.

Additionally, it is also impossible with the currently methodology to isolate Motte-specific ceramics from those deposited by the British troops who occupied the property. The British fortified Mount Joseph Plantation in January of 1781 and remained there until the end of the siege that following May, therefore, it is possible that some of the excavated ceramics belonged to them. Although ceramics and glass were typically seen as a luxury in eighteenth-century military units, officers were known to carry to carry ceramics and participate in the tea ceremony (Ferguson 1975: 45-46). Enlisted men however, would have solely used wooden trenchers and pewter cutlery and cups (Ferguson 1975: 46). Excavations at South Carolina's Fort Watson, a British fort occupied from late December or early January 1780/1781 to April 1781, identified a total of uncovered a total of 624 ceramics (Ferguson 1975: 48). Creamware represented 67.8 percent of this assemblage, pearlware represented 24.0 percent, and Chinese export porcelain represented 3.2 percent (Ferguson 1975: 48). Small amounts of delft, Nottingham, white salt glazed stoneware, Elers ware, and coarse earthenware were also found (Ferguson 1975: 48). Based on this assemblage from this British fort, occupied at

the same time as Fort Motte, it could be argued that some of the Mount Joseph Plantation ceramics belonged to the British officers who may have camped in the house.

The final limitation is the difference in sample size between the two assemblages. The ceramic sample analyzed from the Mount Joseph collection contained only 394 sherds while the sample from the Miles Brewton collection contained 2,739, nearly seven times more. The small amount of sherds currently collected from Mount Joseph Plantation may not be an accurate example of the ceramics utilized by the Motte family at this location. Additionally the vast size difference between the two samples could skew results. Despite these limitations valuable information was gained through the statistical analysis and comparison of the ceramic collections of the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation. This analysis will be discussed further in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### CERAMIC ANALYSIS

This chapter will present the results of the comparative analysis of the ceramic assemblages of the Brewton/Motte family's urban and backcountry residences, the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation. A description of both assemblages, focused on the counts and percentages of ware materials and types, will be presented followed by a general comparison of the two assemblages. Finally, I will discuss the methods and results of the exploratory statistical analysis I performed in order to examine whether the ceramic assemblages of the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation were statistically similar or dissimilar. Three statistical tests were performed, a Brainerd-Robinson Coefficient, Pearson Chi Squares, and a Spearman's rank correlation, the results of which all suggest a difference between the assemblages.

#### **THE MILES BREWTON HOUSE ASSEMBLAGE**

A total of 2,746 identifiable ceramic sherds were recovered from contexts dating from the 1770's – 1790's. Of these, 2,629 sherds were identifiable and represented a total of 33 ceramic ware types (Table 5.1). The types and percentages present in this assemblage seem to be typical of eighteenth century sites. Utilitarian coarse earthenwares comprised the majority of this assemblage at 31.2 percent, with 854 sherds. Of these wares, combed and trailed Staffordshire slipware was the most common, totaling 497

Table 5.1 The Late Eighteenth-Century Ceramic Assemblage of the  
Miles Brewton House

Ware Type	Count	Percent of Assemblage
Chinese export porcelain, underglaze blue	791	28.9
Staffordshire slipware	497	18.2
Delft	323	11.8
White salt glazed stoneware	234	8.5
Creamware	156	5.8
Colonoware	130	4.7
UID coarse earthenware	110	4.0
Brown salt glazed stoneware	69	2.5
Westerwald	63	2.3
Pearlware	56	2.0
Redware	40	1.5
Gray salt glazed stoneware	32	1.2
Wheildon ware	28	1.0
Astbury	26	0.9
Manganese mottled ware	26	0.9
Chinese export porcelain, red overglaze (Imari)	22	0.8
Agate ware	20	0.7
Whiteware	20	0.7
Jackfield	15	0.5
American slipware	12	0.5
Nottingham-like earthenware	10	0.4
Scratch blue stoneware	9	0.3
North Devon Sgraffito	8	0.3
Staffordshire ware	8	0.3
Miscellaneous slipware	7	0.3
North Devon gravel temper	6	0.2
Mid-Atlantic slipware	5	0.2
Nottingham	5	0.2
Elers ware	4	0.1
Buckley	2	<0.1

El Morro	2	<0.1
Southern European ware	1	<0.1
Alkaline glazed stoneware	1	<0.1
White final porcelain	1	<0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2739</b>	<b>100.0</b>

sherds. Staffordshire slipware was the also second largest ware type present in the overall assemblage. Although this number seems large, it is actually typical for Charleston.

According to Zierden (2001: 93) combed and trailed slipware is usually the most common utilitarian ceramic found on eighteenth century Charleston sites. A number of American made slipwares are also represented in this assemblage as well as American made Mid-Atlantic earthenwares. Other European coarse earthenwares appeared in small amounts and included manganese mottled ware, Buckley, El Morro, North Devon gravel tempered and sgraffito wares. Lead glazed redwares totaled 40 sherds and locally made colonoware totaled 130.

Porcelains were the second most abundant ceramic material at 29.7 percent, with 814 sherds. This number is again consistent with other elite residences in Charleston, where porcelains often comprise over 20 percent of the assemblage (Zierden 2001: 92). The majority of the porcelain, 791 sherds, and the most numerous ware type found overall at the Miles Brewton House was underglaze blue Chinese export porcelains. Imari-style overglaze Chinese export porcelains decorated in red, green, and gold floral designs totaled 22 sherds. One sherd of white finial porcelain was also present.

Refined earthenwares totaled 24.0 percent (658 sherds) of the overall assemblage and showed the greatest variation in ware type. Delftware, a generic term used to describe tin enameled earthenwares produced in either Britain or Holland (Hume 1969: 106), was



the most numerous refined earthenware in the assemblage, totaling 323 sherds. Delftware was most popular during the early eighteenth century, but its use persisted through the late eighteenth century (Hume: 107). The majority of the Miles Brewton House Delftware is decorated with blue-one-white hand painting. A few sherds were decorated with polychrome hand painting or a purple sponged design. Creamwares were the second most numerous refined earthenwares, totaling 156 sherds. Most of these are undecorated, although a few sherds feature various molded designs, including feather edges. Two sherds are decorated with a black transfer printed design and one is hand painted in red.

This assemblage also contains small numbers of various forms of finely made earthenware tea wares including 28 sherds of Whieldon ware, 26 of Astbury, 20 of agate ware, 15 of Jackfield, and 10 of Nottingham-like earthenware. Whieldon ware is a type of colorful creamware produced from 1750-1775 (Hume 1969: 124). These wares feature clouded or swirled underglaze designs in purple, brown, yellow, gray and green and some were cast in molds resembling pineapples and cauliflower (Hume 1969: 124). Astbury is a hard, red-bodied, lead glazed earthenware often decorated with sprig molded designs with white pipe clay (Hume 169:123). Agate ware, manufactured in Staffordshire from 1740 to 1775, was made by swirling red and yellow clays together and covering with a clear lead glaze (Hume 1969: 132). Jackfield is a gray, purple or red bodied earthenware covered with a deep black and shiny lead glaze (Hume 1969:123). This ware was made exclusively into teawares or pitchers (Hume 1969:123). Nottingham-like earthenware imitates Nottingham stoneware, which features a gray body and a lustrous brown glaze over a white slip (Zierden 2001: 91).

Stonewares were the smallest ceramic material type at 15.1 percent, with 413 sherds. The stonewares present represent a mix of utilitarian wares and table and tea wares. The utilitarian wares consist of alkaline glazed stoneware, brown and gray British salt glazed stoneware, and Westerwald. Table and tea wares include white salt glazed stoneware, scratch blue stoneware, Elers-like stoneware, and Nottingham. Of these, white salt glazed stoneware is the most numerous with 234 sherds. Many of these sherds are highly decorated with molded rim patterns popular at the time including, dot diaper and basket, bead and reel, and barely. Scratch blue stoneware, a variation of white salt glazed decorated with incised designs filled with cobalt blue (Hume 1969: 118), totaled nine sherds. Five sherds represented Nottingham stoneware. Elers-like wares, a dry bodied red stoneware used for tea wares, totaled four sherds.

#### **THE MOUNT JOSEPH PLANTATION ASSEMBLAGE**

After multiple seasons of fieldwork at Mount Joseph Plantation/Fort Motte, a total of 1,179 kitchen ceramics were recovered from areas in the immediate vicinity of the structural remains of the house and fort. Of these a total of 21 ceramic ware types were identified. Since these artifacts were all recovered from undatable plow zone contexts, only ceramic ware types with a median date of manufacture that fell between 1700 and 1800 were considered for further analysis, a total of 12. This date was determined from ware type date ranges provided by South (1977: 210-212), Hume (1969), Miller et al. (2000) and Steen (2011) and are provided in Table 5.2. The types fitting this criterion are British salt glazed stoneware, colonoware, creamware, English porcelain, faience, Nottingham, underglaze blue Chinese porcelain, overglaze Chinese export porcelain (Imari), Elers-type red stoneware, redware, Staffordshire slipware, Westerwald, and

white salt glazed stoneware. Under this methodology, pearlware, despite originating in 1775 and being present in eighteenth century Miles Brewton House contexts, was not included in analysis due to its median date of 1802.

Table 5.2 Date Ranges of the Mount Joseph Plantation Ceramics

Ware Type	Date Range	Median Date
Alkaline glazed stoneware	1810-1920	1865
American Stoneware	1750-1920	1835
Bristol glazed stoneware	1835-1900	1866
British salt glazed Stoneware	1671-1800	1733
Colonoware	1650-1830	1740
Creamware	1762-1820	1791
English Porcelain	1745-1795	1770
Faience	1700-1800	1750
Fulham	1671-1775	1733
Jasperware	1774-2000	1887
Nottingham	1683-1810	1755
Pearlware	1775-1830	1802
Chinese export porcelain, underglaze blue	1660-1860	1730
Chinese export porcelain, overglaze red (Imari)	1660-1800	1730
Red stoneware (Elers type/Rosso antico)	1690-1775	1733
Redware	1700-1900	1800
Staffordshire slipware	1670-1795	1733
Westerwald	1650-1775	1738
White salt glazed stoneware	1720-1805	1763
Whiteware	1820-2000	1910
Yellow ware	1830-1940	1885

The 12 ceramic ware types that date to the eighteenth century total 394 sherds (Table 5.3), making this assemblage much smaller than that of the Miles Brewton House.

Table 5.3 The Late Eighteenth-Century Mount Joseph Plantation Assemblage

Ware Type	Number	Percent of Assemblage
Creamware	191	48.5
Chinese export porcelain, underglaze blue	67	17.0
White salt glazed stoneware	29	7.4
Colonoware	27	6.9
Redware	16	4.1
British Saltglazed Stoneware Brown (Fullham)	14	3.6
Westerwald	15	3.8
Chinese export porcelain, overglaze red (Imari)	15	3.8
British Saltglazed Stoneware gray	10	2.5
Staffordshire slipware	4	1.0
English Porcelain	3	0.7
Nottingham	1	0.3
Faience	1	0.2
Red stoneware, Elers type (Rosso antico)	1	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Refined earthenwares make up the greatest percentage of this assemblage at 48.7 percent, totaling 192 sherds. This ceramic material type is represented by only two ware types, creamware and one sherd of Faience. In fact creamware comprises nearly half of the entire eighteenth century Mount Joseph Plantation assemblage at 48.5 percent. The

majority of the creamware sherds are undecorated, a total of 167. Fifteen of the decorated creamware sherds feature a magenta colored, overglaze, transfer printed design with a hand painted magenta colored band around the rim. The transfer print pattern features a bird motif. Purple transfer printing on Wedgwood creamware was introduced in 1770 and varied in color from a rich plum to a purplish gray (Towner 1978:64). Various patterns featuring exotic birds were common during this period (Towner 1978:67). Other creamware decorations include unidentified molding, as well as red and polychrome hand painted designs. Due to the small nature of many of the sherds the forms of the creamware are harder to identify, although most appear to be table and tea wares. Two of the creamware sherds are unidentified flat wares perforated with small round holes.

The second most numerous ceramic material type found in the Mount Joseph Plantation assemblage is porcelain at 85 sherds and 21.6 percent. The majority of this category consisted of underglaze blue Chinese export porcelain, totaling 67 sherds. A total of 15 sherds were identified as Imari-style overglaze Chinese export porcelain and were decorated in red, green, blue, and gold floral designs. English soft paste porcelain was represented by three sherds.

Stonewares make up 17.8 percent of the assemblage at 70 sherds and represent a mixture of utilitarian and table/tea wares. These wares include brown (Fulham), gray, and white salt glazed stonewares, Elers-like red stoneware, Nottingham, and Westerwald. White salt glazed stonewares are the most numerous in this category totaling 29 sherds. Four of these sherds are very thick and decorated with molded designs. One sherd is a handle fragment. The smallest percent of the assemblage, 11.9 percent, is represented by coarse earthenwares. The largest ware type in this group is colonoware at 27 sherds,

followed by lead glazed redware at 16 sherds, and four sherds of Staffordshire slipware. All of these wares are utilitarian in form.

## **GENERAL COMPARISONS AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

The two sites differ greatly in the number and variation of ceramic ware types present. The eighteenth century ceramic assemblage of the Miles Brewton House contained nearly three times the number of ceramic types (33) than the Mount Joseph Plantation assemblage (12). Only 12 ceramic types were present at both sites, including brown salt glazed stoneware, colonoware, creamware, Elers-like stoneware, gray salt glazed stoneware, Nottingham stoneware, overglaze Chinese export porcelain, redware, Staffordshire slipware, underglaze blue Chinese export porcelain, Westerwald, and white salt glazed stoneware. Many of the types occurring only at the Miles Brewton house are specifically tea wares, including Whieldon ware, Agate ware, Astbury and Jackfield. The only specific tea ware present in the Mount Joseph Plantation assemblage is Elers ware.

The top five most numerous ceramic types from each site (Table 5.4) also varied greatly, suggesting that the assemblages of the sites were indeed different. The most obvious difference occurs between the amount of Chinese export porcelain and creamware. Chinese export porcelain is the most numerous at the Miles Brewton House at 29.7 percent, while only representing 20.8 percent of the total assemblage at Mount Joseph Plantation. Instead nearly half of the Mount Joseph assemblage was dominated by creamware, which only makes up 5.8 percent of the Miles Brewton House assemblage. Similarly Staffordshire slipware represents 18.2 percent of the Miles Brewton House assemblage while barely being present at Mount Joseph Plantation at one percent. Defltware, the third most numerous ceramic at the Miles Brewton house, is completely

missing from the Mount Joseph assemblage. Although the assemblages appear to be different at first examination, three statistical tests were performed in order to confirm that this difference is statistically sound and not occurring due to random variation.

Table 5.4 The Five Most Numerous Ceramics at Each Site

Miles Brewton House		Mount Joseph Plantation	
Ceramic Type	% of Assemblage	Ceramic Type	% of Assemblage
Chinese export porcelain	29.7	Creamware	48.5
Staffordshire slipware	18.2	Chinese Export Porcelain	20.8
Delftware	11.8	White salt-glazed stoneware	7.4
White salt-glazed stoneware	8.5	Colonoware	6.9
Creamware	5.8	Redware	4.1

#### *Brainerd-Robinson Coefficient of Similarity*

A Brainerd-Robinson Coefficient test was performed comparing all ceramic types that represented at least one percent of the assemblage at either of the sites. A total of 31 types were compared. The Brainerd-Robinson Coefficient is a measure of similarity developed by archaeologists to compare assemblages by proportions of types. The coefficient is calculated by adding the sums of the differences between percentages of each type and subtracting that sum from 200. The result is interpreted on a scale of 0-200, with a value of 200 indicating that the assemblages are exactly similar and a value of 0 indicating that the assemblages are exactly dissimilar. Generally any value below 100 is interpreted as showing a low similarity. The resulting coefficient value for this test was

92.6, indicating that the ceramic assemblages of the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation are not very similar.

### *Chi Square*

Multiple Pearson chi square tests were also performed comparing the difference in ceramic material types as well as the ceramic types that were present at both sites. For both of these tests the null hypothesis was that the ceramic assemblages of the two sites were similar and that any variation that occurred was completely random. The statistical hypothesis was that they were dissimilar and varied non-randomly. The first chi square performed compared the amount of coarse earthenware, refined earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain found at each site (Table 5.5). The obtained level of significance from this test was  $<0.001$  (Table 5.6). This result caused the rejection of the null hypothesis, proving that the ceramic assemblages were statistically different based on amount of material types.

Table 5.5 Ceramic Material Types Compared in Chi Square

<b>Ceramic Material Type</b>	<b>Miles Brewton</b>	<b>Mount Joseph</b>
Coarse Earthenware	854	47
Refined Earthenware	658	192
Stoneware	413	70
Porcelain	814	85



Table 5.6 Results of Ceramic Material Type Chi Square

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	131.469 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	130.315	3	.000
N of Valid Cases	3133		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 60.74.

The second chi square test compared the difference in ceramic ware types under the same statistical hypothesis. A total of nine ware types that were present at each site and had a count greater than five were compared (Table 5.7) The resulting significance from this test was also <0.001 (Table 5.8), demonstrating that the two assemblages are also statistically different based on ceramic ware type. However, the chi squares do not reveal why or where these differences are occurring.

Table. 5.7 Ceramic Ware Types Compared in Chi Square

Ware Type	Miles Brewton	Mount Joseph
Brown salt glazed stoneware	69	14
Gray salt glazed stoneware	32	10
Colonoware	130	27
Creamware	156	191
Overglaze Chinese export porcelain (Imari)	22	15
Redware	40	16
Underglaze blue Chinese export porcelain	791	67
Westerwald	63	15
White salt glazed stoneware	234	29

Table 5.8 Result of Ceramic Ware Type Chi Square

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	373.427 <sup>a</sup>	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	332.713	8	.000
N of Valid Cases	1921		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.40.

### *Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient*

In order to better understand why these assemblages are statistically different, eight of the ten overlapping ceramic types were ranked based on associated signaling status, determined by the combination of cost, fashion, and prestige associated with each ware type. In this scale, one represented the highest status type while seven represented the lowest status (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9 Ranks of Ceramic Ware Types  
Used in Spearman's Rank Correlation

Ceramic Type	Rank
Imari-style Chinese export porcelain	1
Underglaze blue Chinese Export Porcelain	2
Elers-type red bodied stoneware	3
Creamware	4
White salt glazed stoneware	5
Staffordshire slipware	6
Redware	7
Colonoware	8

Two types of Chinese export porcelain were chosen as the highest status ceramics. According to Hume (1969:257) porcelain was one of the most expensive ceramic types during the early eighteenth century and would not have been common in less affluent homes. Although by the end of the eighteenth century underglaze blue varieties of Chinese porcelain had become less expensive and more common, especially in South Carolina, they remained incredibly fashionable (Leath 1999). Leath (1999) argues that by buying Chinese export porcelain and other exported Chinioserie decorative goods, newly rich colonial Americans were attempting to emulate their European counterparts by adopting the latest style. Imari-style export porcelain, present at both the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation, was one of the most expensive varieties of porcelain available (Leath 1999: 50). Imari-style porcelains were given the rank of one and underglaze blue varieties were given the rank of two.

Red-bodied stonewares, often described as “red porcelain” were developed in the mid-eighteenth century as an imitation of dry bodied red stonewares imported from China (Hume 1969: 120). These wares were produced by many of the Staffordshire potters including the Elers brothers and Josiah Wedgwood who called his version “rosso antico” (Hume 1969: 120). Teapots and coffee wares were the most common forms for this ware (Hume 1969:121). Due to its signaling power as a strictly tea ware that would have been used for entertainment purposes and its imitation of a Chinese ware, this ware type was given the rank of three.

Creamwares were given the fourth highest rank for associated signaling status. Creamware was introduced by the Staffordshire potters in the 1760’s and quickly went on to become the dominant ceramic ware (Miller 1991). Although an early high demand for

creamware made it fairly expensive, by the 1790's the demand saw a decline and it became the cheapest refined ware available, as the demand for pearlware, which was developed in the 1780's, increased (Miller 1980, 1991). However, during the late eighteenth century creamware's reputation, especially that produced by Josiah Wedgwood, was second to none (Atterbury 1977). Wedgwood made sure his designs "were up to the minute of fashion" and used this skill to exploit the international style-conscious market (Atterbury 1977: 109). Wedgwood's appeal even reached the Queen of England, to whom he was named "Potter to Her Majesty," further increasing the mass popularity of creamware (Hume 1969: 126). The designs he produced for the royal family, which came to be known as the "Queen's pattern" and "royal pattern" soon became available for anyone to purchase by anyone wishing to emulate the royal family (Hume 1969: 126).

White salt glazed stonewares represent the third highest rank for associated status. The first completely white salt glazed stonewares were produced by the Staffordshire potters in the 1720's and usually took the form of tavern wares (Hume 1969:114). However, by mid century white salt glazed wares had become the typical English tableware and significantly damaged the delftware industry (Hume 1969:115). Unlike Delft, white salt glazed stoneware was able to be manufactured with both a thinness and durability able to compete with costly Chinese porcelain (Hume 1977: 24). Eventually, with further improvements in ceramic production techniques, white salt glazed stoneware's dominance would be replaced by that of creamware (Hume 1977: 25). For this reason white salt glazed stoneware is placed below creamware in the rankings.

During the period that Motte would have occupied these properties was during the height of creamware's fashion.

Three coarse earthenwares were ranked sixth, seventh, and eighth on this scale, Staffordshire slipware, redware, and colonoware. Of all the ceramic material types coarse earthenwares were the easiest and cheapest to make and therefore the most widely used (Hume 1969: 102). Slip decorated earthenwares were widely produced and used from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries (Grisby 1993). These wares were utilitarian and produced for use in kitchens, the dining rooms of the poor and middle class, and taverns (Grisby 1993: 8). In the eighteenth century more refined pieces of slipwares became available and some were made into ornamental pieces (Grisby 1993: 10). The slip design reflected the popular taste for overall decoration (Grisby 1993:11), which is why slipware was placed at a higher rank than the undecorated redwares. Redware is one of the most common coarse earthenwares found on colonial sites and could have either been imported or produced in America. This utilitarian ware is often glazed but never decorated.

Colonoware an unglazed, low fired ceramic would have been locally made by either African Americans or Native Americans and likely the cheapest ceramic available to the Motte family (Ferguson 2004). The percentages of each of these ceramic types present at the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation are presented in Table 5.10.

To compare the similarity between the overall status of ceramics present at the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation, this scale was used to run a Spearman's rank correlation test. These ceramics and their corresponding ranks from each site were ordered from highest to lowest percentage (Table 5.11) and these orders were tested for statistical similarity. The correlation coefficient value obtained from this

test was 0.167 (Table 5.12), which indicates a very low correlation between the two data sets, confirming that the two sites differ not only in ceramic material and types present, but also in the status associated with the overall ceramic assemblage.

Table 5.10 Percentages of Ranked Ceramic Ware Types at Each Site

<b>Ceramic Type</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Miles Brewton House Percentage</b>	<b>Mount Joseph Plantation Percentage</b>
Imari-style Chinese export porcelain	1	0.8	3.8
Underglaze blue Chinese Export Porcelain	2	28.9	17.0
Elers-type red bodied stoneware	3	0.1	0.2
Creamware	4	5.8	48.5
White salt glazed stoneware	5	8.5	7.4
Staffordshire slipware	6	18.2	1.0
Redware	7	1.5	4.1
Colonoware	8	4.7	6.9

Table. 5.11 Rank Order for Ceramic Types From Each Site

<b>Miles Brewton House</b>	<b>Mount Joseph Plantation</b>
2	4
6	2
5	5
4	8
8	7
7	1
1	6
3	3

Table 5.12 Results of Spearman's Rank Correlation

Correlations			MilesBrewton	MountJoseph
Spearman's rho	MilesBrewton	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.167
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.693
		N	8	8
	MountJoseph	Correlation Coefficient	-.167	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.693	.
		N	8	8

## CONCLUSION

The general composition of the ceramic assemblages of both the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation appear to be typical of the late eighteenth century. However, detailed analysis has revealed important differences between the urban and rural occupations. The statistical tests performed on the two data sets indicate that the ceramic assemblages of the sites are statistically different in the types of ceramics found at each and the overall value, in terms of both cost and status, of those ceramics.

Although some of this variation can probably be explained by the slightly later occupation period of Mount Joseph Plantation, I believe that it shows a difference in patterns of the Brewton/Motte family's urban and backcountry life. The reasons why the family would have altered their ceramic consumption behavior in the different regions will be discussed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to explore the variation of colonial experiences in South Carolina. In particular it addressed the question of whether the ceramic consumption patterns of an elite colonial family would differ between their urban and rural households. To answer this question, the late eighteenth century ceramic assemblages of the wealthy Motte family's Charleston and backcountry homes were analyzed and compared.

The results of the statistical comparison of the ceramic remains of the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation demonstrate that the two assemblages are different in terms of both ceramic type and value and suggest that the Motte family consciously changed their ceramic consumption patterns following their move from Charleston to their backcountry plantation. However, these tests do not illuminate the reasons behind this change. This chapter will interpret the ceramic differences of the two sites and explore the reasons why the Motte family would have chosen to utilize lower status and lower cost ceramics at Mount Joseph Plantation.

To better situate the Motte assemblages in their respective regional contexts some brief comparisons with the ceramic assemblages of similar sites will be provided. Next, the various external forces driving the Motte family's consumer decisions will be explored. The economic means of the Motte family to purchase ceramics and the availability of those ceramics in both regions will be discussed to rule out any cost or



access reasons for the difference in the assemblages. Finally social influences illuminated through the theories of conspicuous consumption and costly signaling, will be presented as the most likely reason for the Mottes' shift in ceramic usage.

## **REGIONAL COMPARISONS**

To further explore the difference between the ceramic assemblages of the two residences it is helpful to compare them to similar households in their respective regions and determine if the Miles Brewton House assemblage is typical for other elite Charlestonians and if the Mount Joseph Plantation assemblage is typical of high status backcountry residents. Since 1982 the Charleston Museum has compiled archaeological data from nearly 30 excavation projects on the peninsula to create models for Charleston artifact assemblages for both the early and late eighteenth century (Zierden 2009). The late eighteenth century artifact assemblage is represented by ten of these sites, including the Miles Brewton House (Zierden 2009). Zierden (2009: 268) notes that the during period of the late eighteenth century, roughly 1760 to 1800, the overall density and volume of artifact deposition increased dramatically in Charleston, reflecting an era marked by the acquisition of finery by the city's elite planter class.

During this period the ceramic assemblage of Charleston is dominated by British refined earthenware (Zierden 2009). Creamware makes up nearly 20 percent of the overall assemblage, but only seems to augment, but not replace Chinese export porcelain, which represents 18 percent of the assemblage (Zierden 2009: 278). Colonoware, while popular in the early eighteenth century declines to only 5 percent of the total assemblage during the late eighteenth century (Zierden 2009: 278). Other rough utilitarian wares, like redware and slipware, represent 18 percent of the assemblage (Zierden 2009: 278). The

ceramic assemblage of the Miles Brewton house, although mostly consistent with the Charleston average in terms of utilitarian wares, demonstrates a much higher reliance on Chinese export porcelain, 29.7 percent, and less reliance on creamware at only 5.8 percent.

Excavations from John de la Howe's Leathe Farm plantation site, located in McCormick County and occupied from approximately 1760 to 1806, provide a comparative ceramic assemblage for wealthier backcountry residents (Steen et al. 2002). John De la Howe was a high status French physician who immigrated to Charleston around 1764 where he resided in a mansion on Church Street (Steen et al. 2002: 15). In 1770 he began purchasing land in what is now McCormick County and established Leathe Farm shortly after (Steen et al. 2002: 16-17). It appears that De la Howe managed the plantation from Charleston until retiring there in 1785 (Steen et al. 2002: 17-18).

The ceramic assemblage excavated from Leathe Farm was very large and comprised mostly of colonoware which represented over 63 percent of the entire assemblage (Steen et al. 2002: 98). The extreme amount of colonoware at this site is unique (Steen et al. 2002). Similar to Mount Joseph Plantation, the amount of colonoware at other backcountry sites usually represents less than 10 percent of the ceramic assemblage (Steen et al. 2002: 98). The amount of refined British earthenwares, like creamware, present in the Leathe Farm assemblage is 20.8 percent (Steen et al. 2002: 87). This number is very similar to the amount of creamware in the Charleston assemblage, but remarkably smaller than the 48.5 percent found at Mount Joseph Plantation. The amount of Chinese export porcelain, 2.7 percent, and stoneware, 1.4 percent, from Leathe Farm is also much less than that at Mount Joseph Plantation where Chinese export

porcelain represents 20.8 percent and stoneware represents 17.8 percent (Steen et al. 2002: 87). However, similar to Mount Joseph Plantation, very small amounts of expensive tea wares like Jackfield and Whieldon ware are also present at Leathe Farm (Steen et al. 2002: 87). In both their urban and rural occupations the ceramic assemblage of the Motte family differs from that of their social and regional counterparts, displaying greater status and wealth in each. Although the two Motte assemblages differ from each other, they both indicate a greater reliance on extremely high status ceramics than their neighboring households.

#### **ECONOMIC MEANS AND ACCESS**

There is no question that Rebecca Motte possessed the economic means to acquire any tableware she chose, regardless of cost. She was born to the prominent Brewton family, married into the wealthy Motte family, and enjoyed a privileged life in Charleston prior to the Revolution (Helsley 2009: 113). Rebecca's brother, Miles Brewton, was one of Charleston's richest merchants (Leath 1999: 56). His Charleston home, later inherited by Rebecca, is still one of the finest examples of Georgian Palladian architecture in the country and at the time contained ornately furnished rooms decorated in fashionable Chinese- and gothic-style motifs (Leath 1999: 56-57). Rebecca's husband Jacob Motte Jr. was a successful politician and planter who owned over 200 slaves at his death in 1780 (Helsley 2009: 115). The inheritance Rebecca received at the deaths of brother and husband would have made her one of the wealthiest land and slave owners in Revolutionary era South Carolina (Smith et al. 2007: 13). With this immense family and personal wealth, Rebecca Motte would have had access to the most costly and fashionable tablewares imported to South Carolina.

The port city of Charleston was an “entrepôt for the flow of goods, ideas, and people throughout the Atlantic rim” (Zierden and Herman 1999: 1). By the mid-eighteenth century Charleston was importing a large number of Asian export luxury goods, including Chinese porcelain (Leath 1999: 49). These wares were sold in the city’s fashionable retail district along with merchandise recently imported from England (Leath 1999: 49-50). Shop inventories from the period suggest that due to the city’s heavy participation in the trans-Atlantic trade, Charleston consumers had a large variety of expensive wares to choose from (Leath 1999: 50). With their immense wealth, the Motte family would have had unlimited access to all the fashionable goods available in Charleston.

Studies of backcountry sites in South Carolina and elsewhere prove that these same expensive goods would have also been easily available in more rural regions. Baugher and Venables (1987) demonstrated that in eighteenth century New York status, not location, was the most significant factor in a consumer’s ceramic choice. Their research showed an equal availability of high status ceramics in rural frontier areas as in New York City (Baugher and Venables 1987). They conclude that because of the extent of colonial trade networks, ceramic market access is primarily determined by class, economic, and political factors, not distance from an urban center (Baugher and Venables 1987). Studies from colonial South Carolina have reached similar conclusions (Crass et al. 1999). In their historical and archaeological examination of South Carolina’s New Windsor Township, Crass, Penner, and Forehand (1999), found the presence of all of the various high status goods that could be found in excess in Charleston; however, the quantity of these goods was much less in the backcountry than in a urban setting. Nash

(2009) points out that the close links between town and country in South Carolina allowed consumers from all regions and social classes access to Charleston's supply and distribution system. These studies demonstrate that wealthy backcountry families, like the Mottes, would have had a similar access to high status ceramics as families in Charleston, as long as they could afford the initial purchase.

### **SOCIAL REASONS FOR THE MOTTE FAMILY'S CONSUMPTION CHANGE**

Since questions of the economic means of the Motte family and backcountry market access have been ruled out as reasons for the family's change in ceramic consumption, social reasons must be explored. Although Rebecca Motte was just as wealthy in the backcountry as she was in Charleston, for some reason she chose not to display this wealth, through ceramics, at Mount Joseph Plantation to the same degree that she did in Charleston. The most obvious difference in her varying ceramic choices occurs between the amount of Chinese export porcelain and creamware. Chinese export porcelain, one of the most expensive types of ceramic from the time period, is the most numerous at the Miles Brewton House at 29 percent, while only representing 20 percent of the total assemblage at Mount Joseph Plantation. Instead, nearly half of the Mount Joseph Plantation assemblage was dominated by creamware, which only makes up 6 percent of the Miles Brewton House assemblage and only 20 percent of the Charleston average.

The Miles Brewton House assemblage contained more than twice the number of ceramic types than the Mount Joseph Plantation assemblage. In addition to having a greater number of ceramic types, the Brewton assemblage contained more overall variation. While only two ceramic types, creamware and porcelain, represent nearly

three fourths of the Mount Joseph Plantation assemblage, there is a more equal distribution across types in the Miles Brewton House assemblage. Many of the ceramic types that occur only at the Miles Brewton house are tea wares, including Whieldon ware, Agate ware, Astbury, and Jackfield. Matching tea sets would have been necessary for entertaining and performing the tea ceremony, something that occurred regularly during Charleston's busy social season. The lack of multiple tea wares in the backcountry assemblage may indicate a lesser need for social functions in this region or lack of performance of the tea ceremony.

Although the same types of ceramics would have been readily available to the Motte family in both Charleston and the backcountry, differences in social competition in the two regions would have also influenced their purchasing decisions. According to Henry (1991: 6), consumption is an important reflection of group lifestyle. The elite merchant-planter aristocracy to which the Brewton and Motte family belonged utilized specific types and styles of material culture to signify their group membership and high status, both to fellow group members and lower classes. For this status group, fashionable and costly table and teawares signaled their overall refinement and knowledge of genteel practices to others (Nash 2009). This pursuit of gentility echoes the tenets of the consumer revolution by emphasizing that genteel behavior and its associated status is not earned through birth, but through the knowledge and use of the correct manners, customs, and material culture (Nash 2009: 247).

However, the types of material culture, especially ceramics, needed to signal this status in urban Charleston was much different than in South Carolina's more rural regions. In colonial Charleston, consumers with a lower average wealth than their social

counterparts in rural areas spent much more on consumption goods (Nash 2009: 246). The urban closeness of Charleston and its busy social season allowed for greater visibility of a family's chosen material culture than in the backcountry. To keep up with this conspicuous consumption and distinguish themselves as elite, the Motte family would have to continuously purchase and display only the most costly and fashionable ceramics while living in Charleston.

Although high cost ceramics that signaled gentility were available and present in the backcountry region, rural consumers owned much smaller numbers of them (Crass et al. 1999). The high status backcountry residence of John De la Howe only contained small percentages of the highest status ceramics such as porcelain, Whieldon ware, Astbury, and Jackfield. In the backcountry, much less effort would need to be made for the Motte family to signal their status as elite and genteel. The display of the highest status ceramics, such as Imari and underglaze blue Chinese export porcelain, would have had less social payoff in this region than in more socially competitive Charleston.

The period of Rebecca Motte's occupation at Mount Joseph Plantation, during the midst of the American Revolution, may have also influenced her consumption choices. Although the importation of British-made ceramics to the American colonies did not stop during the war, a social and political stigma around consuming British-made goods during the Revolutionary War may have influenced purchases (Breen 1994; Trunzo 2012). Archaeological evidence from Revolutionary period rural Connecticut suggests that "patriots" bought fewer imported British ceramics during this period (Trunzo 2012: 55). Some Americans gave up British imports, including ceramics and tea, for strictly political reasons and others boycotted out of pressure from their peers (Breen 1994:

449). Various acts passed by Parliament between 1765 and 1770, which levied high taxes on British imports to the colonies sparked the first boycotts on British goods (Breen 1994; Trunzo 2012). Voluntary boycotts and protests lead to the eventual repeal of the 1765 Stamp Act and 1767 Townshend Acts (Trunzo 2012). However, following the Boston Tea Party in 1773 and First Continental Congress in 1774, boycotts became mandatory and enforceable (Trunzo 2012: 58). Changing one's consumer habits to comply with boycotts became an act to define fellow patriots from loyalists and a link between materiality and patriotism (Trunzo 2012).

Rebecca and Jacob Motte actively supported the patriot cause. During the war they provided supplies to the Continental and militia forces (Helsley 2009: 115). According to legend, Rebecca willingly sacrificed her house to ensure a patriot victory during the siege of Fort Motte. Their contribution was so strong that after the war the state of South Carolina paid Rebecca Motte over 600 pounds to settle accounts with her (Helsley 2009: 115). Since the Motte's participated in these visible demonstrations of patriotism it is reasonable to assume that they also willingly complied with importation boycotts and did not purchase any new British ceramics during the Revolutionary War in order to further signal their patriotism. The prevalence of creamware at Mount Joseph Plantation could be due to the Mottes' voluntary change in consumer habits through the boycott of newly imported ceramics. Creamware became widely available in the American colonies in 1770, before the start of the mandatory boycotts (Trunzo 2012). If the Mottes chose to rely only on previously owned ceramics when moving to Mount Joseph Plantation, creamware and porcelain would have been the most fashionable



choices. This choice would not only signal their patriotism to others, but also would signal their social class.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research has demonstrated that the ceramic consumption choices of the Motte family varied between their urban and rural residences, the Miles Brewton House and Mount Joseph Plantation. The excavated ceramic assemblage of each site was analyzed and compared by ceramic material, type, and decoration. Three statistical tests, a Brainerd-Robinson Coefficient, Chi Square, and Spearman's Rank Correlation, were performed on the data, which consistently confirmed the difference in these assemblages. As demonstrated through brief regional comparisons, both of the Mottes' Charleston and backcountry ceramic assemblages are indicative of high status choices that differ from regional norms; however, the rural Mount Joseph Plantation assemblage shows much less overall variation and less reliance on high status ceramics than that of the Miles Brewton House.

The Motte family's wealth and the overall connectedness of the South Carolina backcountry with the Charleston market negate any cost or access reasons for this difference. When these differences are interpreted through the lens of conspicuous consumption and signaling theory, it is clear that the relaxed needs to signal elite group membership in the less socially competitive backcountry is the catalyst for the Motte's change in ceramic consumption. Additionally, the need for the patriotic Motte family to signal their political views regarding the American Revolution through the boycott of imported British goods, including ceramics, offers a second plausible explanation for

their changing consumption patterns. It is likely that a combination of these two practices was responsible for the variance in ceramic choices between the two sites.

As mentioned previously in Chapter Four, there are many limitations to this thesis that future work could correct. Continued excavations at Fort Motte/Mount Joseph Plantation would provide a larger and more tightly dated ceramic assemblage that would allow for more accurate comparisons. Furthermore, additional regional comparisons with both high and low status backcountry sites could only enrich the conclusions I have made. This thesis is certainly not exhaustive, but its analysis of both the urban and rural life of the same family provides a new and valuable contribution to the literature on colonial South Carolina and urban and backcountry studies. This work provides one example of an elite family consciously changing their material culture consumption patterns to better fit into their regional norms.

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